

**ETHICS CODE**  
**OF THE**  
**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO**

**MAYOR'S COMMITTEE ON INTEGRITY AND TRUST  
IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

**PROPOSED REVISIONS  
JANUARY 29, 2003**

<b>CODE OF ETHICS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>PART A: DECLARATION OF POLICY .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SECTION 1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SECTION 2 DEFINITIONS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: PRESENT CITY OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>SECTION 1 IMPROPER ECONOMIC BENEFIT.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>SECTION 2 UNFAIR ADVANCEMENT OF PRIVATE INTERESTS .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>SECTION 4 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>SECTION 5 REPRESENTATION OF PRIVATE INTERESTS .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>SECTION 6 CONFLICTING OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>SECTION 7 PUBLIC PROPERTY AND RESOURCES .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>SECTION 8 POLITICAL ACTIVITY .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>SECTION 9 ACTIONS OF OTHERS .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>SECTION 10 PROHIBITED INTERESTS IN CONTRACTS.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>SECTION 11 CITY COUNCIL CONTRACT PERSONNEL.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>SECTION 12 PERSONS REQUIRED TO REPORT; TIME TO REPORT .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>PART C: FORMER CITY OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>SECTION 1 CONTINUING CONFIDENTIALITY .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>SECTION 2 SUBSEQUENT REPRESENTATION.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>SECTION 3 PRIOR PARTICIPATION IN NEGOTIATING OR AWARDING</b> <b>OF CONTRACTS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>SECTION 4 DISCRETIONARY CONTRACTS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART D: PERSONS DOING BUSINESS WITH THE CITY .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>SECTION 1 PERSONS SEEKING DISCRETIONARY CONTRACTS .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>SECTION 2 DISCLOSURE OF ASSOCIATION WITH CITY OFFICIAL OR</b> <b>EMPLOYEE .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>SECTION 3 DISCLOSURE OF BENEFIT TO CITY OFFICIAL OR EMPLOYEE .</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART E: LOBBYISTS .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>SECTION 1 DEFINITIONS.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>SECTION 2 PERSONS REQUIRED TO REGISTER AS LOBBYISTS .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>SECTION 3 EXCEPTIONS.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>SECTION 4 REGISTRATION .....</b>	<b>28</b>

SECTION 5	ACTIVITY REPORTS .....	30
SECTION 6	RESTRICTED ACTIVITIES.....	31
SECTION 7	IDENTIFICATION OF CLIENTS .....	33
SECTION 8	TIMELINESS OF FILING REGISTRATIONS AND REPORTS.....	34
SECTION 9	ADMINISTRATION .....	34
SECTION 10	CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS.....	35
PART F:	MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND OTHERS.....	35
SECTION 1	FORMS OF RESPONSIBILITY.....	35
PART G:	FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE.....	35
SECTION 1	FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE REPORT .....	35
SECTION 2	CONTENTS OF FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE REPORTS .....	38
SECTION 3	SHORT FORM ANNUAL REPORT .....	39
SECTION 4	TRAVEL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS .....	40
SECTION 5	ITEMS RECEIVED ON BEHALF OF THE CITY.....	40
SECTION 6	OTHER PERSONS REQUIRED TO REPORT GIFTS.....	40
SECTION 7	VIOLATION OF REPORTING REQUIREMENTS .....	41
PART H:	ETHICS REVIEW BOARD .....	41
SECTION 1	DEFINITIONS.....	41
SECTION 2	STRUCTURE OF THE ETHICS REVIEW BOARD .....	41
SECTION 3	JURISDICTION AND POWERS .....	42
SECTION 4	COMPLAINTS.....	43
SECTION 5	ETHICS COMPLIANCE OFFICER .....	46
SECTION 6	ETHICS PANELS .....	47
SECTION 7	HEARINGS.....	48
SECTION 8	DISPOSITION .....	49
SECTION 9	PETITION FOR DECLARATORY RULING.....	51
SECTION 10	ADVISORY OPINIONS.....	51
SECTION 11	ANNUAL REPORT .....	53
SECTION 12	PUBLIC RECORDS AND OPEN MEETINGS .....	53
PART I:	ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS .....	53
SECTION 1	DISCIPLINARY ACTION .....	53
SECTION 2	DAMAGES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF .....	54
SECTION 3	CIVIL FINE.....	54
SECTION 4	PROSECUTION FOR PERJURY .....	54
SECTION 5	VOIDING OR RATIFICATION OF CONTRACT .....	54

SECTION 6	DISQUALIFICATION FROM CONTRACTING .....	55
SECTION 7	FAILURE TO REPORT; PENALTY .....	55
PART J:	ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.....	55
SECTION 1	OTHER OBLIGATIONS.....	55
SECTION 2	EFFECTIVE DATE .....	56
SECTION 3	DISTRIBUTION AND TRAINING.....	56
SECTION 4	SEVERABILITY .....	56

## CODE OF ETHICS

### PART A: DECLARATION OF POLICY

#### SECTION 1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

It is essential in a democratic system that the public have confidence in the integrity, independence, and impartiality of those who act on their behalf in government. Such confidence depends not only on the conduct of those who exercise official power, but on the availability of aid or redress to all persons on equal terms and on the accessibility and dissemination of information relating to the conduct of public affairs. For the purpose of promoting confidence in the government of the City of San Antonio and thereby enhancing the city's ability to function effectively, this code of ethics is adopted. The code establishes standards of conduct, disclosure requirements, and enforcement mechanisms relating to city officials and employees and others whose actions inevitably affect public faith in city government, such as former city officials and employees, candidates for public office, persons doing business with the city, and lobbyists. By prohibiting conduct incompatible with the city's best interests and minimizing the risk of any appearance of impropriety, this code of ethics furthers the legitimate interests of democracy.

**Appearance of Impropriety. Public service is a public trust. All city officials and employees are stewards of the public trust. They have a responsibility to the citizens of San Antonio to enforce the City Charter and the associated ordinances and codes. To ensure and enhance public confidence in City Government, each city official must not only adhere to the principles of ethical conduct set forth in this code and technical compliance therewith, but they must scrupulously avoid the appearance of impropriety at all times.**

*Rationale: This insert is recommended only as a reminder that perception is as important as reality in gaining respect and trust. The Ethics Code mentions minimizing the risk of any appearance of impropriety in only two places – but the subject is not emphasized. Our Subcommittee believes there is a general lack of sensitivity on the part of city officials and employees to minimize the appearance of impropriety -- and it appears some believe that if an action is legal, there is no harm. Numerous examples can be provided.*

## SECTION 2 DEFINITIONS

As used in this code of ethics, the following words and phrases have the meaning ascribed to them in this Section, unless the context requires otherwise or more specific definitions set forth elsewhere in this code apply:

- (a) *Acceptance*. A written or verbal indication that someone agrees; "Acceptance" of an offer of subsequent employment or business opportunities includes legally binding contracts and all informal understandings that the parties expect to be carried out. An agreement, either by express act or by implication from conduct, to the terms of an offer so that a binding contract is formed.
- (b) *Affiliated*. Business entities are "affiliated" if one is the parent or subsidiary of the other or if they are subsidiaries of the same parent business entity.
- (c) *Affinity*. Relationship by "affinity" (by marriage) is defined in Sections 573.024 and 573.025 of the Texas Government Code.
- (d) *Before the City*. Representation or appearance "before the city" means before the City Council; before a board, commission, or other city entity; or before a city official or employee.
- (e) *Benefit*. "Benefit" means anything reasonably regarded as pecuniary gain or pecuniary advantage, including a benefit to any other person in whose welfare the beneficiary has a direct and substantial interest.
- (f) *Business Entity*. "Business entity" means a sole proprietorship, partnership, firm, corporation, holding company, joint-stock company, receivership, trust, unincorporated association, or any other entity recognized by law.
- (g) *Candidate*. "Candidate" means a person who knowingly and willingly takes affirmative action for the purpose of gaining nomination or election to public office or for the purpose of satisfying financial obligations incurred by the person in connection with the campaign for nomination or election. Examples of affirmative action include:
  - (1) the filing of a campaign treasurer appointment, except that the filing does not constitute candidacy or an announcement of candidacy for purposes of automatic resignation provisions of Article XVI, Section 65, or Article XI, Section 11, of the Texas Constitution;
  - (2) the filing of an application for a place on a ballot;
  - (3) the making of a public announcement of a definite intent to run for public office in a particular election, regardless of whether the specific office is mentioned in the announcement;
  - (4) before a public announcement of intent, the making of a statement of definite intent to run for public office and the soliciting of support by letter or other mode of communication; and

- (5) the soliciting or accepting of a campaign contribution or the making of a campaign expenditure.
- (h) *City*. “City” means the City of San Antonio.
- (i) *Code of Ethics*. “Code of ethics,” “ethics code,” or “this code” means Parts A through J of this Chapter, its amendment and/or enhanced definitions.
- (j) *“Complainant”* means an individual who has filed a sworn complaint with the City Clerk as provided in Part H, Section 4 (Complaints).
- (k) *Confidential Government Information*. “Confidential government information” includes all information held by the city that is not available to the public under the Texas Open Records Act and any information from a meeting closed to the public pursuant to the Texas Open Meetings Act, regardless of whether disclosure violates the Act.
- (l) *Consanguinity*. Relationship by “consanguinity” (by blood) is defined in Sections 573.022 and 573.023 of the Texas Government Code.
- (m) *Discretionary Contract*. “Discretionary contract” means any contract other than those which by law must be awarded on a low or high qualified bid basis.
- (n) *Economic Interest*. “Economic interest” includes, but is not limited to, legal or equitable property interests in land, chattels, and intangibles, and contractual rights having more than de minimis value. Service by a city official or employee as an officer, director, advisor, or otherwise active participant in an educational, religious, charitable, fraternal, or civic organization does not create for that city official or employee an economic interest in the property of the organization. Ownership of an interest in a mutual or common investment fund that holds securities or other assets is not an economic interest in such securities or other assets unless the person in question participates in the management of the fund.
- (o) *Employee*. Except as provided in Section 10 of Part B (Prohibited Interests in Contracts), Section 4(c) of Part C (Discretionary Contracts), and Part G (Financial Disclosure), the term “employee” or “city employee” is any person listed on the City of San Antonio payroll as an employee, whether part-time or full-time.
- (p) *Former City Official or Employee*. A “former city official” or “former city employee” is a person whose city duties terminate on or after the effective date of this code.
- (q) *Gift*. “Gift” means a voluntary transfer of property (including the payment of money) or the conferral of a benefit having pecuniary value (such as the rendition of services or the forbearance of collection on a debt), unless consideration of equal or greater value is received by the donor.

- (r) *Indirect Ownership.* A person “indirectly owns” an equity interest in a business entity where the interest is held through a series of business entities, some of which own interests in others.
- (s) *Intentionally.* A person acts intentionally, or with intent, with respect to the nature of his conduct or to a result of his conduct when it is his conscious objective or desire to engage in the conduct or cause the result.
- (t) *Knowingly.* A person acts knowingly, or with knowledge, with respect to the nature of his or her conduct or to circumstances surrounding his or her conduct when he or she is aware of the nature of his or her conduct or that the circumstances exist. A person acts knowingly, or with knowledge, with respect to a result of his or her conduct when he or she is aware that his or her conduct is reasonably certain to cause the result.

**(u) Nominal Value. Nominal value is considered trifling or insignificant – less than ten dollars (\$10) in market value.**

*Rationale: The definition of the word “nominal” will help clarify the acceptance of gifts under Part B, Section 3(a)(2) -- which is essentially a “no gift” policy. This policy will permit acceptance of modest items, such as soft drinks, coffee and doughnuts, offered other than meals. It will also permit individuals to accept items of little intrinsic value such as greeting cards, small calendars, pens or pencils, T-shirts, etc.*

**(v) Official.** Except in Part E (Lobbyists), the term “official” or “city official” includes the following persons:

The Mayor;  
Members of the City Council;  
Municipal Court Judges and Magistrates;  
The City Manager;  
Deputy City Manager;  
Assistant City Managers;  
Assistants to the City Manager;  
City Clerk;  
Assistant City Clerk;  
All department heads and assistant department heads;  
Market Square Superintendent;  
Assistant to City Council;  
Assistant to Mayor;  
Secretary to City Manager;  
Executive Secretaries;  
Community Action Manager;  
Public Utilities Supervisor; and  
Members of all boards, commissions (except the Youth Commission whose members are minors), committees, and other bodies created by the City Council pursuant to federal or state law or City ordinance, including entities that may be advisory only in



nature; and board members of any entity who are appointed by the City Council to such board membership.

The term “official” has a different meaning in Part E (Lobbyists), which is defined in Section 1(a) of that Part. The term “officer” is defined in Section 10(c)(2) of Part B (Prohibited Interests in Contracts) and Section 4(c)(2) of Part C (Discretionary Contracts) and is not synonymous with any use of the term “official” in this code.

**(w) Official Action.** “Official action” includes:

- (1) any affirmative act (including the making of a recommendation) within the scope of, or in violation of, an official or employee’s duties, and
- (2) any failure to act, if the official or employee is under a duty to act and knows that inaction is likely to affect substantially an economic interest of the official or employee or any person or entity listed in Subsections 1(a)(2) through (9) of Part B (Improper Economic Benefit).

**(x) Official Information.** “Official information” includes information gathered pursuant to the power or authority of city government.

**(y) Ownership.** Ownership of an interest in a mutual or common investment fund that holds securities or other assets does not constitute direct or indirect ownership of such securities or other assets unless the person in question participates in the management of the fund.

**(z) Partner.** Someone who engages in an activity or undertaking with another; “Partner” includes partners in general partnerships, limited partnerships, and joint ventures. One who shares or takes part with another especially in a venture with shared benefits and shared risks.

**(aa) Personally and Substantially Participated.** “Personally and Substantially Participated” means to have taken action as an official or employee through decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, giving advice, investigation or similar action. The fact that the person had responsibility for a matter does not by itself establish that the person “personally and substantially participated” in the matter.

**(bb) Recklessly.** A person acts recklessly, or is reckless, with respect to circumstances surrounding his conduct or the result of his conduct when he is aware of but consciously disregards a substantial and unjustifiable risk that the circumstances exist or the result will occur. The risk must be of such a nature and degree that its disregard constitutes a gross deviation from the standard of care that an ordinary person would exercise under all the circumstances as viewed from the actor's standpoint.

**(cc) Representation.** “Representation” is a presentation of fact – either by words or by conduct – made to induce someone to act. Representation does not include appearance as a witness in litigation or other official proceedings.

**(dd)** *Respondent* means an individual identified in a sworn complaint to have allegedly violated the Ethics Code of the City of San Antonio.

**(ee)** *Solicitation*. "Solicitation" of subsequent employment or business opportunities includes all forms of proposals and negotiations relating thereto.

## **PART B: PRESENT CITY OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES**

### **SECTION 1 IMPROPER ECONOMIC BENEFIT**

(a) **General Rule.** To avoid the appearance and risk of impropriety, a city official or employee shall not take any official action that he or she knows is likely to affect the economic interests of:

- (1) the official or employee;
- (2) his or her parent, child, spouse, or other family member within the second degree of consanguinity or affinity;
- (3) his or her outside client;
- (4) a member of his or her household;
- (5) the outside employer of the official or employee or of his or her parent, child, or spouse;
- (6) a business entity in which the official or employee knows that any of the persons listed in Subsections (a)(1) or (a)(2) holds an economic interest;
- (7) a business entity which the official or employee knows is an affiliated business or partner of a business entity in which any of the persons listed in Subsections (a)(1) or (a)(2) holds an economic interest;
- (8) a business entity or nonprofit entity for which the city official or employee serves as an officer or director or in any other policy making position; or
- (9) a person or business entity:
  - (A) from whom, within the past twelve months, the official or employee, or his or her spouse, directly or indirectly has
    - (i) solicited,
    - (ii) received and not rejected, or
    - (iii) accepted an offer of employment; or
  - (B) with whom the official or employee, or his or her spouse, directly or indirectly is engaged in negotiations pertaining to business opportunities.

(b) **Recusal and Disclosure.** A city official or employee whose conduct would otherwise violate Subsection (a) must recuse himself or herself. From the time that the conflict is, or should have been recognized, he or she shall:

- (1) immediately refrain from further participation in the matter, including discussions with any persons likely to consider the matter; and
- (2) promptly file with the City Clerk the appropriate form for disclosing the nature and extent of the prohibited conduct.

In addition:

- (3) a supervised employee shall promptly bring the conflict to the attention of his or her supervisor, who will then, if necessary, reassign responsibility for handling the matter to another person; and
- (4) a member of a board shall promptly disclose the conflict to other members of the board and shall not be present during the board's discussion of, or voting on, the matter.

(c) **Definitions.** For purposes of this rule:

- (1) An action is likely to affect an economic interest if it is likely to have an effect on that interest that is distinguishable from its effect on members of the public in general or a substantial segment thereof; and
- (2) The term *client* includes business relationships of a highly personalized nature, but not ordinary business-customer relationships.

## SECTION 2 UNFAIR ADVANCEMENT OF PRIVATE INTERESTS

(a) **General Rule.** A city official or employee may not use his or her official position to unfairly advance or impede private interests, or to grant or secure, or attempt to grant or secure, for any person (including himself or herself) any form of special consideration, treatment, exemption, or advantage beyond that which is lawfully available to other persons.

(b) **Special Rules.** The following special rules apply in addition to the general rule:

- (1) **Acquisition of Interest in Impending Matters.** A city official or employee shall not acquire an interest in, or affected by, any contract, transaction, zoning decision, or other matter, if the official or employee knows, or has reason to know, that the interest will be directly or indirectly affected by impending official action by the city.
- (2) **Reciprocal Favors.** A city official or employee may not enter into an agreement or understanding with any other person that official action by the official or employee will be rewarded or reciprocated by the other person, directly or indirectly.
- (3) **Appointment of Relatives.** A city official or employee shall not appoint or employ or vote to appoint or employ any relative within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity to any office or position of employment within the city.
- (4) **Supervision of Relatives.** No official or employee shall be permitted to be in the line of supervision of a relative within the third degree of consanguinity or second degree of affinity. Department heads are responsible for enforcing this policy. If an employee, by reason of marriage, promotion, reorganization, or otherwise, is placed into the line of supervision of a relative, one of the

employees will be reassigned or other appropriate arrangements will be made for supervision.

- (c) **Recusal and Disclosure.** A city official or employee whose conduct would otherwise violate Subsection (b)(3) of this Part shall adhere to the recusal and disclosure provisions provided in Section 1(b) of Part B (Improper Economic Benefit).

## SECTION 3 GIFTS

(a) **General Rule.**

- (1) A city official or employee shall not solicit, accept, or agree to accept any gift or benefit for himself or herself or his or her business:
- (A) that reasonably tends to influence or reward official conduct; or
  - (B) that the official or employee knows or should know is being offered with the intent to influence or reward official conduct.
- (2) A city official or employee shall not solicit, accept, or agree to accept any gift or benefit, save and except for items received that are of nominal value ~~and meals in an individual expense of \$100 or less at any occurrence,~~ from:
- (A) any individual or business entity doing or seeking to do business with the City; or
  - (B) any registered lobbyist or public relations firm-; **or**  
**(C) any person seeking or advocating on zoning or platting matters before a city body.**

Doing business with the city includes, but is not limited to, individuals and business entities that are parties to a discretionary contract, individuals and business entities that are subcontractors to a discretionary contract, and partners and/or parents and/or subsidiary business entities of any individuals and business entities that are parties to a discretionary contract.

*Rationale: The existing policy permits unlimited gifts and meals under \$100 for city officials and employees. Our Subcommittee strongly believes this policy is wrong -- and should be eliminated. The existing policy accepts and encourages the appearance of impropriety. If the government of the City of San Antonio wants to strengthen a culture of service, integrity and trust that instills public confidence, it should initiate essentially a "no gift" policy for all city officials and employees. The Ethics Code contains special applications in Section 3(b) for exceptions to the "no gift" policy that appear appropriate and reasonable. It also appears appropriate that the gift policy should also include all individuals seeking changes in zoning or platting matters before a city body.*

(b) **Special Applications.** Subsections (a)(1) and (a)(2) do not include:

- (1) a gift to a city official or employee relating to a special occasion, such as a wedding, anniversary, graduation, birth, illness, death, or holiday, provided that

- the value of the gift is fairly commensurate with the occasion and the relationship between the donor and recipient;
- (2) reimbursement of reasonable expenses for travel authorized in accordance with city policies;
  - (3) a public award or reward for meritorious service or professional achievement, provided that the award or reward is reasonable in light of the occasion;
  - (4) a loan from a lending institution made in its regular course of business on the same terms generally available to the public;
  - (5) a scholarship or fellowship awarded on the same terms and based on the same criteria that are applied to other applicants;
  - (6) admission to an event in which the city official or employee is participating in connection with official duties;
  - (7) any solicitation for civic or charitable causes; or
  - (8) admission to an event in which the city official or employee is participating in connection with his or her spouse's position.
- (9) ceremonial and protocol gifts presented to city officials from a foreign government or international or multinational organization and accepted for the City of San Antonio.**

*Rationale: This adds a provision for the acceptance of official protocol gifts by city officials for the City of San Antonio*

- (c) **Campaign Contribution Exception.** The general rule stated in Subsection (a) does not apply to a campaign contribution made pursuant to the Texas Election Code.
- (d) **Gifts to Closely Related Persons.** A city official or employee shall take reasonable steps to persuade:
- (1) a parent, spouse, child, or other relative within the second degree of consanguinity or affinity, or
  - (2) an outside business associate

not to solicit, accept, or agree to accept any gift or benefit:

- (3) that reasonably tends to influence or reward the city official's or employee's official conduct, or
- (4) that the official or employee knows or should know is being offered with the intent to influence or reward the city official's or employee's discharge of official duties.

If a city official or employee required to file a financial disclosure report under Part G (Financial Disclosure) knows that a gift or benefit meeting the requirements of Subsections (d)(3) or (d)(4) of this rule has been accepted and retained by a person identified in Subsections (d)(1) or (d)(2) of this rule, the official or employee shall promptly file a report with the City Clerk's office disclosing the donor, the value of the

gift or benefit, the recipient, and the recipient's relationship to the official or employee filing the report.

- (e) **Definition.** For purposes of this rule, a person is an "outside business associate" if both that person and the city official or employee own, with respect to the same business entity:
- (1) ten (10) percent or more of the voting stock or shares of the business entity, or
  - (2) ten (10) percent or more of the fair market value of the business entity.

## SECTION 4 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

- (a) **Improper Access.** A city official or employee shall not use his or her position to obtain official information about any person or entity for any purpose other than the performance of official duties.
- (b) **Improper Disclosure or Use.** A city official or employee shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly disclose any confidential information gained by reason of said official's or employee's position concerning the property, operations, policies or affairs of the city. This rule does not prohibit:
- (1) any disclosure that is no longer confidential by law; or
  - (2) the confidential reporting of illegal or unethical conduct to authorities designated by law.

## SECTION 5 REPRESENTATION OF PRIVATE INTERESTS

- (a) **Representation by a Member of the Board.** A city official or employee who is a member of a board or other city body shall not represent any person, group, or entity:
- (1) before that board or body;
  - (2) before city staff having responsibility for making recommendations to, or taking any action on behalf of, that board or body, unless the board or body is only advisory in nature; or
  - (3) before a board or other city body which has appellate jurisdiction over the board or body of which the city official or employee is a member, if any issue relates to the official's or employee's official duties.
- (b) **Representation Before the City.**
- (1) **General Rule.** A city official or employee shall not represent for compensation any person, group, or entity, other than himself or herself, or his or her spouse or minor children, before the city. For purposes of this subsection, the term compensation means money or any other thing of value that is received, or is to be received, in return for or in connection with such representation.
  - (2) **Exception for Board Members.** The rule stated in subsection b(1) does not apply to a person who is classified as a city official only because he or she is an appointed member of a board or other city body.

- (3) **Prestige of Office and Improper Influence.** In connection with the representation of private interests before the city, a city official or employee shall not:
  - (A) assert the prestige of the official's or employee's city position for the purpose of advancing private interests; or
  - (B) state or imply that he or she is able to influence city action on any basis other than the merits.
- (c) **Representation in Litigation Adverse to the City.**
  - (1) **Officials and Employees (Other than Board Members).** A city official or employee, other than a person who is classified as an official only because he or she is an appointed member of a board or other city body, shall not represent any person, group, or entity, other than himself or herself, or his or her spouse or minor children, in any litigation to which the city is a party, if the interests of that person, group, or entity are adverse to the interests of the city.
  - (2) **Board Members.** A person who is classified as a city official only because he or she is an appointed member of a board or other city body shall not represent any person, group, or entity, other than himself or herself, or his or her spouse or minor children, in any litigation to which the city is a party, if the interests of that person, group, or entity are adverse to interests of the city and the matter is substantially related to the official's duties to the city.

## SECTION 6 CONFLICTING OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

- (a) **General Rule.** A city official or employee shall not solicit, accept, or engage in concurrent outside employment which could reasonably be expected to impair independence of judgment in, or faithful performance of, official duties.
- (b) **Special Application.** The following special rule applies in addition to the general rule: A city official or employee shall not provide services to an outside employer related to the official's or employee's city duties.
- (c) **Other Rules.** The general rule stated above applies in addition to all other rules relating to outside employment of city officials and employees, including requirements for obtaining prior approval of outside employment as applicable.

## SECTION 7 PUBLIC PROPERTY AND RESOURCES

A city official or employee shall not use, request, or permit the use of city facilities, personnel, equipment, or supplies for private purposes (including political purposes), except:

- (a) pursuant to duly adopted city policies, or
- (b) to the extent and according to the terms that those resources are lawfully available to the public.

## SECTION 8 POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Limitations on the political activities of city officials and employees are imposed by state law, the City Charter, and city personnel rules. In addition, the following ethical restrictions apply:

- (a) **Influencing Subordinates.** A city official or employee shall not, directly or indirectly, induce or attempt to induce any city subordinate of the official or employee:
  - (1) to participate in an election campaign, contribute to a candidate or political committee, or engage in any other political activity relating to a particular party, candidate, or issue, or
  - (2) to refrain from engaging in any lawful political activity.

A general statement merely encouraging another person to vote does not violate this rule.

- (b) **Paid Campaigning.** A city official or employee shall not accept any thing of value, directly or indirectly, for political activity relating to an item pending on the ballot, if he or she participated in, or provided advice relating to, the exercise of discretionary authority by a city body that contributed to the development of the ballot item. ~~Any thing of value does not include a meal or other item of nominal value the city official or employee receives in return for providing information on an item pending on the ballot.~~

*Rationale: Our Subcommittee believes it is improper for a city official or employee to receive any thing of value (gifts or meals) for providing information or advice concerning an item pending on the ballot.*

- (b) **Official Vehicles.** A city official or employee shall not display or fail to remove campaign materials on any city vehicle under his or her control.

Limitations on the use of public property and resources for political purposes are imposed by Section 7 of Part B (Public Property and Resources).

## SECTION 9 ACTIONS OF OTHERS

- (a) **Violations by Other Persons.** A city official or employee shall not intentionally or knowingly assist or induce, or attempt to assist or induce, any person to violate any provision in this code of ethics.



- (b) **Using Others to Engage in Forbidden Conduct.** A city official or employee shall not violate the provisions of this code of ethics through the acts of another.

## SECTION 10 PROHIBITED INTERESTS IN CONTRACTS

- (a) **Charter Provision.** The Charter of the City of San Antonio, in Section 141, states “No officer or employee of the City shall have a financial interest, direct or indirect, in any contract with the City, or shall be financially interested, directly or indirectly, in the sale to the City of any land, materials, supplies, or service, except on behalf of the City as an officer or employee. Any willful violation of this Section shall constitute malfeasance in office, and any officer or employee guilty thereof shall thereby forfeit his office or position. Any violation of this Section, with the knowledge, expressed or implied, of the person or corporation contracting with the Council shall render the contract involved voidable by the City Manager or the Council.”
- (b) **Financial Interest.** An officer or employee has a prohibited “financial interest” in a contract with the city, or in the sale to the city of land, materials, supplies, or service, if any of the following individuals or entities is a party to the contract or sale:
- (1) the officer or employee;
  - (2) his or her ~~parent, child, or spouse~~ spouse, sibling, parent, child or other family member within the first degree of consanguinity or affinity;

*Rationale: Adding other family members with the first degree of consanguinity or affinity makes the list of individuals with a prohibited interest more complete.*

- (3) a business entity in which the officer or employee, or his or her parent, child or spouse, directly or indirectly owns:
    - (A) ten (10) percent or more of the voting stock or shares of the business entity, or
    - (B) ten (10) percent or more of the fair market value of the business entity; or
  - (4) a business entity of which any individual or entity listed in Subsection (1), (2) or (3) is:
    - (A) a subcontractor on a city contract;
    - (B) a partner; or
    - (C) a parent or subsidiary business entity.
- (c) **Definitions.** For purposes of enforcing Section 141 of the City Charter under the provisions of this Section:
- (1) a city “employee” is any employee of the city who is required to file a financial disclosure statement pursuant to Section 1(a) of Part G (Financial Disclosure Report).
  - (2) a city “officer” is:
    - (A) the Mayor or any Council member;

- (B) a Municipal Court Judge or Magistrate; or
- (C) a member of any board or commission which is more than advisory in nature. The term does not include members of the board of another governmental entity even if some or all of these members are appointed by the city.
- (d) Any contract or transaction already in place at the time the individual becomes an officer or employee subject to the prohibitions in Section 141 of the City Charter may remain in place until the contract expires or the transaction is completed without creating a prohibited financial interest for the officer or employee.**

*Rationale: This provides a grandfather clause for contracts already in place for employees who may become an employee or officer subject to this section.*

## **SECTION 11 CITY COUNCIL CONTRACT PERSONNEL**

- (a) A member of the City Council who, in the course of official duties, has direct supervisory authority over contract personnel shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that the conduct of contract personnel is compatible with the obligations imposed on city officials and employees by this code of ethics.
- (b) Contract personnel employed by a member of the city council shall comply with all obligations imposed by this code of ethics on city employees.
- (c) All contracts for administrative services between a member of the City Council and independent contractors shall contain a provision requiring the independent contractor to comply with all requirements imposed by this code on city employees.

## **SECTION 12 PERSONS REQUIRED TO REPORT; TIME TO REPORT; PLACE TO REPORT**

- (a) A City official or employee who has knowledge of a violation of any of the provisions of this Ethics Code shall report this violation as provided below within a reasonable time after the person has knowledge of a violation. A City official or employee shall not delegate to, or rely on, another person to make the report.
- (b) Unless waived in writing by the person making the report, the identity of an individual making a report under this section is confidential and may be disclosed only to the proper authorities for the purposes of conducting an investigation of the report.
- (c) A report made under this Section shall be made to:

- (1) the Ethics Compliance Officer or his or her designee; or
  - (2) the Ethics Review Board.
- (d) A report shall state:
- (1) the name of the City official or employee who believes that a violation of a provision of the Ethics Code has been or may have been committed;
  - (2) the identity of the person or persons who allegedly committed the violation;
  - (3) a statement of the facts on which the belief is made; and
  - (4) any other pertinent information concerning the alleged violation.

## **PART C: FORMER CITY OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES**

### **SECTION 1 CONTINUING CONFIDENTIALITY**

A former city official or employee shall not use or disclose confidential government information acquired during service as a city official or employee. This rule does not prohibit:

- (a) any disclosure that is no longer confidential by law; or
- (b) the confidential reporting of illegal or unethical conduct to authorities designated by law.

### **SECTION 2 SUBSEQUENT REPRESENTATION**

- (a) **Representation by a Former Board Member.** A person who was a member of a board or other city body shall not represent any person, group, or entity for a period of two (2) years after the termination of his or her official duties:
- (1) before that board or body;
  - (2) before city staff having responsibility for making recommendations to, or taking any action on behalf of, that board or body, unless the board or body is only advisory in nature; or
  - (3) before a board or other city body which has appellate jurisdiction over the board or body of which the former city official or employee was a member, if any issue relates to his or her former duties.

(b) **Representation Before the City.**

- (1) A former city official or employee shall not represent for compensation any person, group, or entity, other than himself or herself, or his or her spouse or minor children, before the city for a period of two (2) years after termination of his or her official duties. This subsection does not apply to a person who was classified as a city official only because he or she was an appointed member of a board or other city body. For purposes of this subsection, the term compensation means money or any other thing of value that is received, or is to be received, in return for or in connection with such representation.
- (2) In connection with the representation of private interests before the city, a former city official or employee shall not state or imply that he or she is able to influence city action on any basis other than the merits.

(c) **Representation in Litigation Adverse to the City.** A former city official or employee shall not, absent consent from the city, represent any person, group, or entity, other than himself or herself, or his or her spouse or minor children, in any litigation to which the city is a party, if the interests of that person, group, or entity are adverse to the interests of the city and the matter is one in which the former city official or employee personally and substantially participated prior to termination of his or her official duties.

### **SECTION 3 PRIOR PARTICIPATION IN NEGOTIATING OR AWARDING OF CONTRACTS**

A former city official or employee may not, within two (2) years of the termination of official duties, perform work on a compensated basis relating to a discretionary contract, if he or she personally and substantially participated in the negotiation or awarding of the contract. A former city official or employee, within two (2) years of termination of official duties, must disclose to the City Clerk immediately upon knowing that he or she will perform work on a compensated basis relating to a discretionary contract for which he or she did not personally and substantially participate in its negotiation or award. **This subsection does not apply to a person who was classified as a city official only because he or she was an appointed member of a board or other city body.**

*Rationale: There does not appear to be a need to require former members of boards, commissions, and committees to disclose this information if they were not involved in the negotiation or award.*

### **SECTION 4 DISCRETIONARY CONTRACTS**

- (a) **Impermissible Interest in Discretionary Contract or Sale.** This Subsection applies only to contracts or sales made on a discretionary basis, and does not apply to contracts or sales made on a competitive bid basis. Within one (1) year of the termination of official duties, a former city officer or employee shall neither have a financial interest, direct or indirect, in any discretionary contract with the City, nor

have a financial interest, direct or indirect, in the sale to the City of any land, materials, supplies, or service. Any violation of this Section, with the knowledge, expressed or implied, of the individual or business entity contracting with the Council shall render the contract involved voidable by the City Manager or the Council. A former city officer or employee has a prohibited "financial interest" in a discretionary contract with the city, or in the sale to the city of land, materials, supplies, or service, if any of the following individuals or entities is a party to the contract or sale:

- (1) the former officer or employee;
- (2) his or her parent, child, or spouse;
- (3) a business entity in which the former officer or employee, or his or her parent, child or spouse, directly or indirectly owns:
  - (A) ten (10) percent or more of the voting stock or shares of the business entity, or
  - (B) ten (10) percent or more of the fair market value of the business entity; or
- (4) a business entity of which any individual or entity listed in Subsection (1), (2) or (3) is:
  - (A) a subcontractor on a city contract;
  - (B) a partner; or
  - (C) a parent or subsidiary business entity.

(b) **Exception: Prior Employment or Status.** Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this Section 4 (Discretionary Contracts) and Section 3 (Prior Participation in Negotiation or Awarding of Contracts), a former city official or employee may upon leaving official duties return to employment or other status enjoyed immediately prior to commencing official city duties.

(c) **Definitions.** For purposes of this Section:

- (1) A "former city employee" is any person who, prior to termination of employee status, was required to file a financial disclosure statement pursuant to Section 1(a) of Part G (Financial Disclosure Report).
- (2) A "former city officer" is any person who, immediately prior to termination of official duties, was:
  - (A) the Mayor or a member of City Council;
  - (B) a Municipal Court Judge or Magistrate; or
  - (C) a member of any board or commission which is more than advisory in nature. The term does not include members of the board of another governmental entity even if some or all of these members are appointed by the city.
- (3) The term "contract" means any discretionary contract other than a contract for the personal services of the former city official or employee.
- (4) The term "service" means any services other than the personal services of the former official or employee.

**PART D: PERSONS DOING BUSINESS WITH THE CITY****SECTION 1 PERSONS SEEKING DISCRETIONARY CONTRACTS**

- (a) **Disclosure of Parties, Owners, and Closely Related Persons.** For the purpose of assisting the city in the enforcement of provisions contained in the City Charter and this code of ethics, an individual or business entity seeking a discretionary contract from the city is required to disclose in connection with a proposal for a discretionary contract on a form provided by the city:
- (1) the identity of any individual who would be a party to the discretionary contract;
  - (2) the identity of any business entity that would be a party to the discretionary contract and the name of:
    - (A) any individual or business entity that would be a subcontractor on the discretionary contract; and
    - (B) any individual or business entity that is known to be a partner, or a parent or subsidiary business entity, of any individual or business entity who would be a party to the discretionary contract; and
  - (3) the identity of any lobbyist or public relations firm employed for purposes relating to the discretionary contract being sought by any individual or business entity who would be a party to the discretionary contract.

An individual or business entity seeking a discretionary contract is required to supplement this filing on a form provided by the city in the event there is any change in the information required of the individual or business entity under Part D, Section 1, (a)(1), (a)(2), (a)(2)(A), (a)(2)(B), or (a)(3). The individual or business entity seeking a discretionary contract must supplement this filing before the discretionary contract is the subject of council action, and no later than five (5) business days after any change about which information is required to be filed.

- (b) **Political Contributions.** Any individual or business entity seeking a discretionary contract from the city must disclose in connection with a proposal for a discretionary contract, on a form provided by the city, all political contributions totaling one hundred dollars (\$100) or more within the past twenty-four (24) months made directly or indirectly to any current or former member of City Council, any candidate for City Council, or to any political action committee that contributes to City Council elections, by any individual or business entity whose identity must be disclosed under Subsection (a). Indirect contributions by an individual include, but are not limited to, contributions made by an individual's spouse, whether statutory or common-law. Indirect contributions by an entity include, but are not limited to, contributions made through the officers, owners, attorneys, or registered lobbyists of the entity.
- (c) **Briefing Papers and Open Records.** Briefing papers prepared for the city council concerning any proposed discretionary contract to be considered for ordinance action shall reveal the information disclosed in compliance with Subsections (a) and (b), and that information shall constitute an open record available to the public.

**SECTION 2 DISCLOSURE OF ASSOCIATION WITH CITY OFFICIAL OR EMPLOYEE**

- (a) **Disclosures During Appearances.** A person appearing before a city board or other city body shall disclose to it any known facts which, reasonably understood, raise a question as to whether any member of the board or body would violate Section 1 of Part B (Improper Economic Benefit) by participating in official action relating to a matter pending before the board or body.
- (b) **Disclosures in Proposals.** Any individual or business entity seeking a discretionary contract with the city shall disclose, on a form provided by the city, any known facts which, reasonably understood, raise a question as to whether any city official would violate Section 1 of Part B (Improper Economic Benefit) by participating in official action relating to the discretionary contract.
- (c) **Definition.** For purposes of this rule, facts are “reasonably understood” to “raise a question” about the appropriateness of official action if a disinterested person would conclude that the facts, if true, require recusal or require careful consideration of whether or not recusal is required.

**SECTION 3 DISCLOSURE OF BENEFIT TO CITY OFFICIAL OR EMPLOYEE**

If a person who requests official action on a matter knows that the requested action will confer an economic benefit on any city official or employee that is distinguishable from the effect that the action will have on members of the public in general or a substantial segment thereof, he or she shall disclose that fact in a signed writing to the city official, employee, or body that has been requested to act in the matter, unless the interest of the city official or employee in the matter is apparent. The disclosure shall also be made in a signed writing filed with the City Clerk.

## **PART E: LOBBYISTS**

### **SECTION 1 DEFINITIONS**

As used in Part E (Lobbyists), the following words and phrases have the meaning ascribed to them in this Section, unless the context requires otherwise:

- (a) *City official* means the Mayor, members of the City Council, Municipal Court Judges and Magistrates, the City Manager, Deputy City Manager, City Clerk, Assistant City Clerk, Assistant City Managers, Assistants to the City Manager, all department heads, assistant department heads, Market Square Superintendent;; Assistant to City Council; Assistant to Mayor; Secretary to City Manager; Executive Secretaries; Community Action Manager; Public Utilities Supervisor, members of bid committees, and members of the following boards and commissions: Board of Adjustment; Board of Appeals; City Public Service; Fire Fighter's and Police Officer's Civil Service Commission; Electrical Examining and Supervising Board; Ethics Review Board established pursuant to this Ethics Code; Greater Kelly Development Authority and any authority later created under Chapter 378, Defense Base Development Authorities, of Subtitle A, Title 12 of the Texas Local Government Code; Historic and Design Review Commission; Housing Authority of San Antonio; Municipal Civil Service Commission; Planning Commission; Plumbing Appeals and Advisory Board; Public Library Board of Trustees; San Antonio Water System; Urban Renewal Agency (SADA); Zoning Commission; and any other board or commission that is more than advisory in nature.
- (b) *Client* means any person on whose behalf lobbying is conducted. If a person engages in lobbying on that persons own behalf, whether directly or through the acts of others, the person is both a client and a lobbyist (as defined in Subsection (g)). In the case of a coalition or association that employs or retains other persons to conduct lobbying activities, the client is the coalition or association and not its individual members.
- (c) *Compensation* means money or any other thing of value that is received, or is to be received, in return for or in connection with lobbying services rendered, or to be rendered, including reimbursement of expenses incurred in lobbying.

Compensation does not include a payment made to any individual regularly employed by a person if (1) the payment ordinarily would be made regardless of whether the individual engaged in lobbying activities and (2) lobbying activities are not part of the individual's regular responsibilities to the person making the payment. Compensation does not include the financial gain that a person may realize as a result of the determination of a municipal question, unless that gain is in the form of a contingent fee. If a lobbyist engages in both lobbying activities and other activities on behalf of a person, compensation for lobbying includes all amounts received from that person, if, for the purpose of evading the obligations imposed under Part E (Lobbyists), the



lobbyist has structured the receipt of compensation in a way that unreasonably minimizes the value of the lobbying activities. Compensation which has not yet been received is considered to be received on the date that it is earned, if that date is ascertainable; otherwise, it is received on the date on which the contract or agreement for compensation is made, or on the date lobbying commences, whichever is first. Compensation does not include any amounts previously reported under Section 5 of Part E (Activity Reports).

- (d) *Expenditure* means a payment, distribution, loan, advance, reimbursement, deposit, or gift of money or anything of value, including a contract, promise, or agreement to make an expenditure, regardless of whether such contract, promise, or agreement is legally enforceable.

Expenditure does not include an amount paid to any individual regularly employed by a person if (1) the amounts paid to the individual are ordinarily paid regardless of whether the individual engages in lobbying activities and (2) lobbying activities are not part of the individual's regular responsibilities to the person making the payment. The date on which an expenditure is incurred is determined according to generally accepted accounting principles. The term "expenditure" does not include the cost of photocopying city documents, if those costs are the only expenditures made by the person in question on lobbying activities.

- (e) *Gift* has the same meaning as in Part A, Section 2 (Definitions).

- (f) *Immediate family* means a spouse and dependent children.

- (g) *Lobbyist* means a person who engages in lobbying, whether directly or through the acts of another. If an agent or employee engages in lobbying for a principal or employer, both the agent and the principal, or the employee and the employer, are lobbyists.

- (h) *Lobby* or *Lobbying*, except as provided below, means any oral or written communication (including an electronic communication) to a city official, made directly or indirectly by any person in an effort to influence or persuade an official to favor or oppose, recommend or not recommend, vote for or against, or take or refrain from taking action on any municipal question. The term lobby or lobbying does not include a communication:

- (1) merely requesting information or inquiring about the facts or status of any municipal question, matter, or procedure, and not attempting to influence a city official;
- (2) made by a public official or employee (including, but not limited to, an official or employee of the City of San Antonio) acting in his or her official capacity;
- (3) made by a representative of a media organization if the purpose of the communication is gathering and disseminating news and information to the public;

- (4) made in a speech, article, publication, or other material that is distributed and made available to the public, or through radio, television, cable television, or any other medium of mass communication;
  - (5) made at a meeting open to the public under the Open Meetings Act;
  - (6) made in the form of a written comment filed in the course of a public proceeding or any other communication that is made on the record in a public proceeding;
  - (7) made in writing as a petition for official action and required to be a public record pursuant to established city procedures;
  - (8) made in writing to provide information in response to an oral or written request by a city official for specific information;
  - (9) the content of which is compelled by law;
  - (10) made in response to a public notice soliciting communications from the public and directed to the official specifically designated in the notice to receive such communications;
  - (11) made on behalf of an individual with regard to that individual's employment or benefits;
  - (12) made by a fact witness or expert witness at an official proceeding; or
  - (13) made by a person solely on behalf of that individual, his or her spouse, or his or her minor children.
- (i) *Lobbying firm* means:
- (1) a self-employed lobbyist, or
  - (2) a person that has one or more employees who are lobbyists on behalf of a client or clients other than that person.
- (j) *Municipal question* means a public policy issue of a discretionary nature pending or impending before city council or any board or commission, including, but not limited to, proposed action, or proposals for action, in the form of ordinances, resolutions, motions, recommendations, reports, regulations, policies, nominations, appointments, sanctions, and bids, including the adoption of specifications, awards, grants, or contracts. The term "municipal question" does not include the day-to-day application, administration, or execution of **existing** city programs and policies ~~such as permitting, platting, and zoning matters~~ (other than the amendment, modification or revision of the City of San Antonio Unified Development Code). **It also does not include a matter that may be approved administratively without consideration by a Board or Commission.** The term "municipal question" does include all **discretionary** matters before the Board of Adjustment, **the Planning Commission and the Zoning Commission and all advisory committees and subcommittees thereof.**

***Rationale: In our research, our Subcommittee has not been able to determine any rationale for excluding zoning matters from this definition. We believe matters before the Planning Commission and Zoning Commission should be included.***

- (k) *Person* means an individual, corporation, association, firm, partnership, committee, club, organization, or a group of persons voluntarily acting in concert.
- (l) *Registrant* means a person required to register under Section 2 of Part E (Persons Required to Register as Lobbyists).
- (m) *Knowingly* has the same meaning as in Part A, Section 2 (Definitions).

## SECTION 2 PERSONS REQUIRED TO REGISTER AS LOBBYISTS

Except as provided by Section 3 of Part E (Exceptions), a person who engages in lobbying must register with the City Clerk if:

- (a) with respect to any client, the person engages in lobbying activities for compensation;  
or
- (b) the person expends monies for lobbying activities.

The terms “compensation” and “expenditure” are defined in Section 1 of Part E (Definitions).

## SECTION 3 EXCEPTIONS

The following persons are not required to register under Section 4 of Part E (Registration) or file an activity report under Section 5 of Part E (Activity Reports):

- (a) **Media Outlets.** A person who owns, publishes or is employed by:
  - (1) a newspaper;
  - (2) any other regularly published periodical;
  - (3) a radio station;
  - (4) a television station;
  - (5) a wire service; or
  - (6) any other bona fide news medium that in the ordinary course of business disseminates news, opinions, or paid advertisements that directly or indirectly oppose or promote municipal questions or seek to influence official action relating thereto, if the person does not engage in other activities that require registration under Part E (Lobbyists). This Subsection does not exempt the news media or a person whose relation to the news media is only incidental to a lobbying effort or if a position taken or advocated by a media outlet directly impacts, affects, or seeks to influence a municipal question in which the media outlet has a direct or indirect economic interest.
- (b) **Mobilizing Entity Constituents.** A person whose only lobbying activity is to encourage or solicit the members, employees, or owners (including shareholders) of

an entity by whom the person is compensated to communicate directly with one or more city officials to influence municipal questions. This exception is intended to apply to neighborhood associations and other similar not-for-profit organizations.

- (c) **Governmental Entities.** Governmental entities and their officials and employees, provided the communications relate solely to subjects of governmental interest concerning the respective governmental bodies and the city.
- (d) **Unknown Municipal Questions.** A person who neither knows nor has reason to know that a municipal question is pending at the time of contact with a city official. This Subsection does not apply if the existence of a municipal question is discovered during on-going contacts with a city official and the person then engages in additional lobbying of the same official or other city officials with respect to that municipal question.
- (e) **Dispute Resolution.** An attorney or other person whose contact with a city official is made solely as part of resolving a dispute with the city, provided that the contact is solely with city officials who do not vote on or have final authority over any municipal question involved and so long as such an attorney complies with Rule 4.02 of the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct, as amended.
- (f) **Compensation of Registrant.** A client who would only be required to register under Section 3 because of any expenditure to compensate a registrant, other than an employee, to lobby on a municipal question of interest to the client, provided that the compensated registrant files a registration statement or activity report for the period in question.
- (g) **Agent or Employee.** An agent or employee of a lobbying firm or other registrant that files a registration statement or activity report for the period in question fully disclosing all relevant information known to the agent or employee.
- (h) **Individual.** An individual who engages in lobbying but who neither receives compensation nor expends monies for lobbying with respect to any client.

## SECTION 4 REGISTRATION

- (a) **Separate Registrations.** A person required to register as a lobbyist under Section 2 of Part E (Persons Required to Register as Lobbyists) must file a separate registration form for each client. A registrant who makes more than one lobbying contact for the same client shall file a single registration form covering all lobbying contacts for that client. Each registration form must be signed under oath. If the registrant is not an individual, an authorized officer or agent of the registrant shall sign the form.

- (b) **Initial Registration.** An initial registration form relating to a client must be filed by a person required to register under Section 2 of Part E (Persons Required to Register as Lobbyists) within 90 days after the start of lobbying activity for that client. However, in no event shall a registrant knowingly fail to register, or knowingly fail to disclose such registration to relevant city officials, prior to official city action relating to the subject matter of the lobbying activity.
- (c) **Subsequent Annual Registration.** Except as provided in Subsection (e) (Termination of Registration) subsequent registration forms must be filed annually each January for each client for whom a registrant previously filed, or was required to file, an initial registration form.
- (d) **Required Disclosures.** Initial or subsequent registration shall be on a form prescribed by the City Clerk and shall include, to the extent applicable:
- (1) the full name, telephone number, permanent address, and nature of the business of:
    - (A) the registrant;
    - (B) the client;
    - (C) any person, other than the client, on whose behalf the registrant has been engaged by the client to lobby;
    - (D) any person, other than the client, who is known by the registrant to contribute financially to the compensation of the registrant, or which, in whole or in major part, plans, supervises, or controls the registrant's lobbying activities on behalf of the client;
    - (E) any lobbying firm for which the registrant is an agent or employee with respect to the client; and
    - (F) each employee or agent of the registrant who has acted or whom the registrant expects to act as a lobbyist on behalf of the client;
  - (2) a statement of all municipal questions on which the registrant has lobbied for the client in the year preceding the filing of the registration or foreseeably will lobby;
  - (3) a list of any positions held by the registrant as an official or employee of the City of San Antonio, as those terms are defined in Section 2 of Part A (Definitions) during the past two (2) years.
  - (4) if the registrant is a former city official or employee, a statement that the registrant's lobbying activities have not violated and will not foreseeably violate Section 2(a) or (b) or Section 3(b) of Part C (Former City Officials and Employees) of this ethics code.
- (e) **Termination of Registration.** A registrant shall file a notice of termination of registration with the City Clerk if the registrant is no longer required to register by Section 2 of Part E (Persons Required to Register as Lobbyists). A filing under this Subsection does not relieve the registrant of reporting requirements imposed by Section 5 of Part E (Activity Reports) for the reporting period in question.
- (f) **Fee.** At the time of initial or subsequent annual registration with respect to a client, a registrant shall pay to the city, and the City Clerk shall collect, a fee in an amount to

be determined by the City Council. All lobbyist registration fees shall be deposited into a separate account within the general fund, which account shall be used to offset the costs of administering the city's lobbying ordinance and the costs of handling disclosure filings.

- (g) Ethics Code Briefing. During the registration process, the Ethics Compliance Officer shall offer a briefing to each new registrant on Part E Lobbyists of the Ethics Code and each shall be provided a copy of the Ethics Code.**

*Rationale: A briefing on the Lobbyists section of the Ethics Code by the Ethics Compliance Officer should be helpful to each new lobbyist and in turn to all city officials and employees.*

## SECTION 5 ACTIVITY REPORTS

- (a) **Required Disclosures.** Except as provided in Section 3 of Part E (Exceptions), each registrant shall file with the City Clerk a separate report signed under oath concerning the registrant's lobbying activities for each client from whom, or with respect to whom, the registrant received compensation of, or expended, monies for lobbying during the prior calendar quarter. The report for the preceding calendar quarter shall be filed between the first and fifteenth day of April, July, October, or January, or on the date registration on behalf of the client is required, whichever comes later. If the registrant is not an individual, an authorized officer or agent of the registrant shall sign the form. The report shall be on the form prescribed by the City Clerk and shall include, with respect to the previous calendar quarter, to the extent applicable:
- (1) the name of the registrant, the name of the client, and any changes or updates in the information provided in the most recent registration statement filed pursuant to Section 4 of Part E (Registration);
  - (2) a list of the specific issues upon which the registrant engaged in lobbying activities, including, to the maximum extent practicable, a list of specific legislative proposals and other proposed, pending, or completed official actions;
  - (3) a list of the city officials contacted by the registrant on behalf of the client with regard to a municipal question;
  - (4) a list of the employees or agents of the registrant who acted as lobbyists on behalf of the client;
  - (5) in the case of a registrant engaged in lobbying activities on its own behalf, a good faith estimate of the total expenditures as defined in Section 1 of Part E (Definitions) that the registrant and its agents or employees incurred in connection with lobbying activities;
  - (6) each gift, benefit, or expenditure greater than ~~fifty dollars (\$50)~~ **ten dollars (\$10)** made to, conferred upon, or incurred on behalf of a city official or his or her immediate family by the registrant, or by anyone acting on behalf of the registrant, shall be itemized by date, city official, actual cost, and circumstances of the transaction;

*Rationale: This change is to make the gift policy consistent throughout the Code.*

- (7) each exchange of money, goods, services, or anything of value by the registrant, or by anyone acting on behalf of the registrant, with any business entity in which the registrant knows or should know that a city official has an economic interest, or for which the city official serves as a director or officer, or in any other policy making position, if:
  - (A) the total of such exchanges is one thousand dollars (\$1000) or more in a calendar quarter; and
  - (B) the city official:
    - (i) has been lobbied by the registrant during the calendar quarter; or
    - (ii) serves on a board or other city body that has appellate jurisdiction over the subject matter of the lobbying.

Each exchange shall be itemized by date, business entity and address, city official, amount, and nature of transaction. For purposes of this Subsection, the term "exchange" does not include a routine purchase from a commercial business establishment, if the city official in question is neither aware, nor likely to become aware, of the transaction; and

- (8) the name and position of each city official or member of a city official's immediate family who is employed by the registrant.
- (b) **Preservation of Records.** Each registrant shall obtain and preserve all accounts, bills, receipts, books, papers and documents necessary to substantiate the activity reports required to be made pursuant to this Section for five (5) years from the date of filing of the report containing such items.
  - (c) **No Activity or Changes.** No quarterly activity report is required if there is no activity during the preceding quarter calendar year and there are no other changes to items required to be reported.
  - (d) **Estimates of income or expenses.** For purposes of Subsections (a)(5), (a)(6), and (a)(7), required estimates of compensation or expenses shall be made to the nearest one hundred dollars (\$100), for amounts totaling less than five thousand dollars (\$5,000), and to the nearest one thousand dollars (\$1000), for amounts totaling more than five thousand dollars (\$5000).
  - (e) **Contingent fees.** A person shall disclose employment to lobby on a contingent fee basis as well as any arrangement to engage in lobbying activities on a contingent fee arrangement.

## SECTION 6 RESTRICTED ACTIVITIES

- (a) **False Statements.** A person who lobbies or engages another person to lobby, or any other person acting on behalf of such persons, shall not intentionally or knowingly make any false or misleading statement of fact to any city official, or, knowing a

document to contain a false statement, cause a copy of such document to be received by a city official without notifying such official in writing of the truth.

- (b) **Failure to Correct Erroneous Statement.** A registrant who learns that a statement contained in a registration form or activity report filed by the registrant during the past three (3) years is false shall not fail to correct that statement by written notification to the City Clerk within thirty days of learning of the falsehood.
- (c) **Personal Obligation of City Officials.** A person who lobbies or engages another person to lobby, or any other person acting on behalf of such person, shall not do any act, or refrain from doing any act, with the express purpose and intent of placing any city official under personal obligation to such lobbyist or person.
- (d) **Improper Influence.** A registrant shall not cause or influence the introduction of any ordinance, resolution, appeal, application, petition, nomination, or amendment thereto for the purpose of thereafter being employed as a lobbyist to secure its granting, denial, confirmation, rejection, passage, or defeat.
- (e) **False Appearances.** A person who lobbies or engages another person to lobby, or any other person acting on behalf of such person, shall not cause any communication to be sent to a city official in the name of any fictitious person or in the name of any real person, except with the consent of such real person.
- (f) **Prohibited Representations.** A person who lobbies or engages another person to lobby, or any other person acting on behalf of such person, shall not represent, either directly or indirectly, orally or in writing, that that person can control or obtain the vote or action of any city official.
- (g) **Legislator's Exclusion.** ~~At any time within sixty (60) days of a date when the Texas Legislature is to be in session, or at any time the Texas Legislature is in session, or when the Texas Legislature sits as a Constitutional Convention,~~ Members of the Texas Legislature and their **spouses**, agents and employees are prohibited from lobbying as that term is defined in Section 1, subsection (h), of Part E (Lobbyists) of this Code.

*Rationale: Our Subcommittee believes a potential conflict of interest and the appearance of impropriety exist any time a member of the Texas Legislature lobbies any city official or employee. Spouses have also been included in this section to make it more complete. Although it is possible there may be some Constitutional questions associated with this proposed revision, we offer it as a policy that would enhance the image of our City Government.*

- (h) **Lobbying by Councilmembers.** ~~At any time within sixty (60) days of a date when the Texas Legislature is to be in session, or at any time the Texas Legislature is in session, or when the Texas Legislature sits as a Constitutional Convention,~~



**M**embers of the City Council of the City of San Antonio are prohibited from lobbying members of the Texas Legislature on behalf of the Councilmember's private client(s) or employer. Councilmembers are not prohibited from meeting with members of the Texas Legislature on behalf of the City of San Antonio concerning legislation, administrative action, or any other action in their official City capacity. For the purposes of this subsection, lobbying means any oral or written communication (including an electronic communication) to a member of the legislative branch, made directly or indirectly, by a City Councilmember in an effort to influence or persuade a member of the legislative branch to favor or oppose, recommend or not recommend, vote for or against, or take or refrain from taking action on any legislation or administrative action on behalf of the Councilmember's private client(s) or employer.

*Rationale: A potential conflict of interest and the appearance of impropriety exist any time a Councilmember lobbies a member of the Texas Legislature on any matter other than city business. Although it is possible there may be some constitutional questions associated with this proposed revision, we offer it as a policy that would enhance the image of our City Government.*

- (i) **Limitations on Gifts.** A person who lobbies or engages another person to lobby, or any other person acting on behalf of such persons, shall not give gifts to a City official or a City employee or his or her immediate family, save and except for items received that are of nominal value. ~~and meals in an individual expense of \$100 or less at any occurrence.~~

*Rationale: This proposed revision is to make the "no gift" policy consistent throughout the Code.*

- (j) **Prohibited Lobbying.** A person who lobbies or engages another person to lobby, or any other person acting on behalf of such person, is prohibited from lobbying activities with city officials and employees during the period of request for proposal (RFP) evaluation and source selection of any project in which the lobbyist has an interest. If contact is required during this period, the appropriate city official or employee must initiate it.

*Rationale: This proposed revision was originally recommended by the BIH Commission in November 1998 -- and appears to be valid today. No revision was made to the Ethics Code as a result of the BIH Commission recommendation and the city staff has not developed an appropriate administrative directive.*

## SECTION 7 IDENTIFICATION OF CLIENTS

- (a) **Appearances.** Each person who lobbies or engages another person to lobby appearing before the City Council or an official body identified in the definition of "city official" in Section 1 of Part E (Definitions) shall orally identify himself or herself and

the client(s) he or she represents upon beginning an address. Each person who lobbies or engages another person to lobby shall also disclose on appropriate sign-in sheets his or her identity, the identity of the client he or she represents, and whether he or she is registered as a lobbyist as required by Section 2 of Part E (Persons Required to Register as Lobbyists).

- (b) **Oral Lobbying Contacts.** Any person who makes an oral lobbying contact with an official shall, on the request of the official at the time of the lobbying contact, state whether the person is registered under Part E (Lobbyists) and identify the client or clients on whose behalf the lobbying contact is made.
- (c) **Written Lobbying Contacts.** Any registrant who makes a written lobbying contact (including an electronic communication) with a city official shall identify the client(s) on whose behalf the lobbying contact is made and identify himself or herself as a registered lobbyist.

## SECTION 8 TIMELINESS OF FILING REGISTRATIONS AND REPORTS

A registration or report filed by first-class United States mail or by common or contract carrier is timely if:

- (a) it is properly addressed with postage and handling charges prepaid; and
- (b) it bears a post office cancellation mark or a receipt mark from a common or contract carrier indicating a time within the applicable filing period or before the applicable filing deadline, or if the person required to file furnishes satisfactory proof that it was deposited in the mail or with a common or contract carrier within that period or before that deadline.

## SECTION 9 ADMINISTRATION

The City Clerk shall:

- (a) provide guidance and assistance on the registration and reporting requirements for lobbyists and develop common standards, rules, and procedures for compliance with Part E (Lobbyists);
- (b) review for completeness and timeliness registrations and reports;
- (c) maintain filing, coding, and cross-indexing systems to carry out the purposes of Part E (Lobbyists), including:
  - (1) a publicly available list of all registered lobbyists, lobbying firms, and their clients; and
  - (2) computerized systems designed to minimize the burden of filing and maximize public access to materials filed under Part E (Lobbyists);

- (d) make available for public inspection and copying at reasonable times the registrations and reports filed under Part E (Lobbyists); and
- (e) retain registrations and reports in accordance with the Local Government Records Act.

## **SECTION 10 CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS**

Nothing in Part E (Lobbyists) shall be construed to prohibit or interfere with any person's rights guaranteed by the United States and Texas Constitutions.

## **PART F: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND OTHERS**

Part F (Members of the Public and Others) applies to current and former city officials and employees, persons doing business with the city, and lobbyists, as well as to members of the public and any other person (including business entities and nonprofit entities).

## **SECTION 1 FORMS OF RESPONSIBILITY**

No person shall intentionally or knowingly induce, attempt to induce, conspire with, aid or assist, or attempt to aid or assist another person to engage in conduct violative of the obligations imposed by Parts B (Present City Officials and Employees), C (Former City Officials and Employees), D (Persons Doing Business with the City), and E (Lobbyists) of this ethics code.

## **PART G: FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE**

### **SECTION 1 FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE REPORT**

#### **(a) Persons Required to File Disclosure Form.**

- (1) **City Officials and Designated City Employees.** No later than thirty (30) after accepting appointment or assuming the duties of office, and annually thereafter, the city officials defined in Section 2 of Part A (Definitions), Police Department Captains, Assistant Chiefs, and Deputy Chiefs, all appointed Deputy Fire Chiefs and appointed Assistant Fire Chiefs, and any Assistant Fire Chief who either works in the Fire Administration Building or any other division and is involved in having input to any contract, vehicle specification, or who is otherwise involved with the purchasing of any product, service, or land for the Fire Department, any fire Inspector, Plan Reviewer or Uniformed Administrator of the Fire Prevention Division, any uniformed employee involved in maintaining Departmental Personnel Records located at the Fire Administration Building, any uniformed Personnel utilized in evaluating or purchasing equipment, vehicles or any other

purchases who also have contact with contractor(s) who provide such equipment or vehicles, and any Uniformed Personnel utilized in providing input to any contract or composing specifications of equipment and vehicles, who also have contact with contractor(s) who provide such services, equipment or vehicles are required to file with the City Clerk a complete sworn financial disclosure report.

- (2) **Candidates for City Council.** A non-incumbent candidate for a place on the City Council shall file a sworn financial disclosure report with the City Clerk containing all information required by Subsections (a) through (m) of Section 2 of Part G (Contents of Financial Disclosure Reports) within fifteen (15) days from the date of filing as a candidate.
- (b) **Open Records.** Financial disclosure reports are open records subject to the Texas Open Records Act, and shall be maintained in accordance with the Local Government Records Act.
- (c) **Annual Filing Date.** Annual financial disclosure reports filed by City officials who are City employees and by City employees who are required to report must be received by the City Clerk by 4:30 p.m. on the 31st day of January. Annual financial disclosure reports filed by City officials who are not City employees and who are required to report must be received by the City Clerk by 4:30 p.m. on the 1st day of March. When the deadline falls on a Saturday or Sunday, or on an official city holiday as established by the City Council, the deadline for receipt by the City Clerk is extended to 4:30 p.m. of the next day which is not a Saturday or Sunday or official city holiday. The City Clerk shall grant an extension of time in which to file a report upon written request submitted in advance of the deadline. The extension shall not exceed fifteen (15) days.
- (d) **Reporting Periods.** Each initial or annual financial disclosure report filed by an individual designated in Section 1(a)(1) of Part G (Financial Disclosure Report), and each report filed by a candidate for City Council, shall disclose information relating to the prior calendar year, as well as any material changes in that information which occurred between the end of the prior calendar year and the date of filing.
- (e) **City Clerk.** The City Clerk shall:
  - (1) prior to January 15 of each year, notify city officials and employees specified in Subsection (a)(1) of their obligation to file financial disclosure reports and provide forms to be completed;
  - (2) provide forms to all new City Council appointees and those filing for elective office, and advise them of reporting requirements and deadlines;
  - (3) provide guidance and assistance on the reporting requirements for persons required to file financial disclosure reports and develop common standards, rules, and procedures for compliance with Part G (Financial Disclosure);
  - (4) review reports for completeness and timeliness;

- (5) maintain filing, coding, and cross-indexing systems to carry out the purpose of Part G (Financial Disclosure), including:
  - (A) a publicly available list of all persons required to file; and
  - (B) computerized systems designed to minimize the burden of filing and maximize public access to materials filed under Part G (Financial Disclosure);
- (6) make available for public inspection and copying at reasonable times the reports filed under Part G (Financial Disclosure);
- (7) upon determining that such appointee who is required to file a financial disclosure report has failed to do so or has filed incomplete or unresponsive information, notify the individual by certified mail that failure to file or correct the filing within fifteen (15) days after the original deadline constitutes an automatic resignation. At the same time, the City Clerk shall publicly announce to the City Council the names of those who have not filed and to whom this notification is being sent. If such an appointee fails to file a completed report within fifteen (15) days from the original deadline, the position shall be considered vacant, and a new appointment shall be made by the City Council; and
- (8) upon determining that the Mayor, a member of City Council, a candidate for City Council, the City Manager, or a Municipal Court Judge or Magistrate has failed to timely file a financial disclosure report, or has filed incomplete or unresponsive information, notify the individual by certified mail that failure to file or correct the filing within fifteen (15) days after the original deadline will result in the matter being forwarded to the Ethics Review Board. If the person in question fails to file a completed report within fifteen days of the original deadline, a report of non-compliance shall be forwarded to the Ethics Review Board for appropriate action.
- (9) upon determining that a person other than as provided in subsections (7) or (8) above, has failed to timely file a financial disclosure report, or has filed incomplete or unresponsive information, notify the individual by certified mail that failure to file or correct the filing within fifteen (15) days after the original deadline will result in the matter being forwarded to the City Manager. If the person in question fails to file a completed report within fifteen days of the original deadline, a report of non-compliance shall be forwarded to the City Manager for appropriate action.

The failure of the City Clerk to provide any notification required by this Section does not bar appropriate remedial action, but may be considered on the issue of culpability.

- (f) **Exception.** A city official who is a member of a board or commission created pursuant to federal or state law, may only be removed for failing to file a financial disclosure form if allowed under federal or state law.

## SECTION 2 CONTENTS OF FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE REPORTS

Each initial or annual financial disclosure report shall disclose, on a form provided by the city, the following information:

- (a) the reporting party's name;
- (b) the name of any person related as parent, child, or spouse to the reporting party;
- (c) the name of any member of the reporting party's household not disclosed under Subsection (b) of this rule;
- (d) the name of any employer of any person disclosed under Subsections (a) or (b) of this rule;
- (e) the name of any business entity (including self employment in the form of a sole proprietorship under a personal or assumed name) in which the reporting party or his or her spouse holds an economic interest;
- (f) the name of any business which the reporting party knows is a partner, or a parent or subsidiary business entity, of a business entity owned, operated, or managed by the reporting party or his or her spouse;
- (g) the name of any person or business entity from whom the reporting party or his or her spouse, directly or indirectly:
  - (1) has received and not rejected an unsolicited offer of subsequent employment; or
  - (2) has accepted an offer of subsequent employment which is binding or expected by the parties to be carried out;
- (h) the name of each nonprofit entity or business entity in which the reporting party serves as an officer or director, or in any other policy making position;
- (i) the name of each business entity which has sought city business, has a current city contract or anticipates seeking city business in which any individual listed in Subsection (a) or (b) is known to directly or indirectly own:
  - (1) ten (10) percent or more of the voting stock or shares of the business entity, or
  - (2) ten (10) percent or more of the fair market value of the business entity;
- (j) the name of any business entity of which any individual or entity disclosed under Subsection 2(a) or (2)(i) is known to be:
  - (1) a subcontractor on a city contract;
  - (2) a partner; or
  - (3) a parent or subsidiary business entity.

- (k) the name of each source of income, other than dividends or interest, amounting to more than five thousand dollars (\$5000) received during the reporting period by the reporting party or his or her spouse, unless that source has been disclosed under Subsections (a) through (j) of this rule;
- (l) the identification by street address, or legal or lot-and-block description, of all real property located in the State of Texas in which the reporting party or his or her spouse has a leasehold interest, a contractual right to purchase, or an interest as: fee simple owner; beneficial owner; partnership owner; joint owner with an individual or corporation; or owner of more than twenty-five (25) percent of a corporation that has title to real property. There is no requirement to list any property:
  - (1) used as a personal residence of a peace officer;
  - (2) over which the reporting party has no decision power concerning acquisitions or sale; or
  - (3) held through a real estate investment trust, mutual fund, or similar entity, unless the reporting party or his or her spouse participates in the management thereof;
- (m) The name of persons or entities to whom the reporting party or spouse owes an unsecured debt of more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00), other than debts for:
  - (1) money borrowed from a family member from his or her own resources; and
  - (2) revolving charge accounts.
- (n) The name of each person, business entity, or other organization from whom the reporting party, or his or her spouse, received a gift with an estimated fair market value in excess of one hundred dollars (\$100) during the reporting period and the estimated fair market value of each gift. Excluded from this requirement are:
  - (1) lawful campaign contributions which are reported as required by state statute;
  - (2) gifts received from family members within the second degree of affinity or consanguinity;
  - (3) gifts received among and between fellow city employees and city officials; and
  - (4) admission to events in which the reporting party participated in connection with official duties.

### **SECTION 3 SHORT FORM ANNUAL REPORT**

A person who is required to file an annual financial disclosure report may fulfill his or her filing obligations by submitting a short sworn statement on a form provided by the city, if there have been few or no changes in the information disclosed by that person in a complete financial disclosure report filed within the past five (5) years. The short statement shall indicate the date of the person's most recently filed complete financial disclosure report and shall state that there have been no material changes in that information or shall list any material changes that have occurred.

## **SECTION 4 TRAVEL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

- (a) Any person listed in Subsection (b) who, in connection with his or her official duties, accepts a trip or excursion involving the gratuitous provision of transportation, accommodations, entertainment, meals, or refreshments paid for by a person or entity other than a public agency must file with the City Clerk, before embarking on the travel, a disclosure statement identifying:
  - (1) the name of the sponsor;
  - (2) the places to be visited; and
  - (3) the purpose and dates of the travel.
- (b) The following persons are required to report under this Section: the Mayor, members of the City Council, Municipal Court Judges and Magistrates, City Manager, Deputy City Manager, City Clerk, Assistant City Clerk, Assistant City Managers, Assistants to the City Manager, and all department heads, assistant department heads, and employees in positions listed on the executive pay plan (Job Class 1000 through 1999). Acceptance of a trip or excursion by an individual listed above other than the Mayor or a member of the City Council must receive prior written approval of the City Manager.

## **SECTION 5 ITEMS RECEIVED ON BEHALF OF THE CITY**

A city official or employee who accepts any item by way of gift valued over \$100.00 or loan on behalf of the city must promptly report that fact to the City Manager, who shall have the item appropriately inventoried as city property.

## **SECTION 6 OTHER PERSONS REQUIRED TO REPORT GIFTS**

In addition to the gift reporting requirements imposed by the financial disclosure rules stated in Section 2(n) of Part G (Contents of Financial Disclosure Reports), other city employees specified on a list compiled annually by the Human Resources Department (or its successor department) and submitted to the City Clerk, and contract administrative assistants to members of City Council are also required to file an annual report on or before the 31<sup>st</sup> day of January of each year showing the source of gifts received during the previous year with a cumulative value of over one hundred dollars (\$100.00). Excluded from this requirement are gifts received from family members within the second degree of affinity or consanguinity and gifts among and between city employees and city officials.



## SECTION 7 VIOLATION OF REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Failure to timely file a report required by the rule stated in Part G (Financial Disclosure) is a violation hereof, as is the filing a report with incorrect, misleading, or incomplete information.

## PART H: ETHICS REVIEW BOARD

### SECTION 1 DEFINITIONS

As used in Part H (Ethics Review Board), the term “ethics laws” includes this code of ethics, Section 141 of the City Charter, and Section 171 of the Texas Local Government Code. The term “ethical violation” includes violations of any of those enactments. Other terms used in Part H (Ethics Review Board) are defined in Section 2 of Part A (Definitions).

### SECTION 2 STRUCTURE OF THE ETHICS REVIEW BOARD

- (a) **Establishment.** There is hereby established an Ethics Review Board, which shall have the powers and duties specified in Part H (Ethics Review Board).
- (b) **Composition.** The Ethics Review Board shall consist of eleven (11) members. The Mayor and each member of the City Council shall nominate one member of the Board. Each nominee must be confirmed by a majority of City Council members. Nomination and confirmation of Board members shall be conducted at separate open meetings of the City Council.
- (c) **Terms of Office.** Board members shall be appointed to two-year terms. Initial appointments shall be made so that terms are staggered. No member shall serve for more than three two-year terms.
- (d) **Qualifications.** Members of the Board shall have good moral character and shall be residents of the city. No member of the Board shall be:
  - (1) a salaried city official or employee;
  - (2) an elected public official;
  - (3) a candidate for elected public office;
  - (4) an officer of a political party; or
  - (5) a lobbyist required to register under Part E (Lobbyists) of this ethics code.
- (e) **Removal.** Members of the Ethics Review Board may be removed from office for cause by a majority of the City Council only after a public hearing at which the member was provided with the opportunity to be heard. Grounds for removal include: failure to satisfy, or to continue to satisfy, the qualifications set forth in Subsection (d);

substantial neglect of duty; gross misconduct in office; inability to discharge the powers or duties of office; or violation of any provision in this code of ethics.

- (f) **Vacancies.** A vacancy shall be filled by a person who will serve for the remainder of the unexpired term. The appointment shall **be** made by the member of City Council who is entitled to make appointments to the seat that was vacated, and must be confirmed by a majority of the City Council.
- (g) **Recusal.** A member of the Ethics Review Board shall recuse himself or herself from any case in which, because of familial relationship, employment, investments, or otherwise, his or her impartiality might reasonably be questioned. A Board member may not participate in official action on any complaint:
  - (1) that the member initiated;
  - (2) that involves the member of City Council who nominated him or her for a seat on the Ethics Review Board; or
  - (3) during the pendency of an indictment or information charging the member with an offense, or after a finding of guilt of such an offense.

If the number of Board members who are recused from a case is so large that an Ethics Panel cannot be constituted, as provided for in Section 6 of Part H (Ethics Panel), the Mayor shall nominate a sufficient number of *ad hoc* members so that the case can be heard. Ad hoc members of the Ethics Review Board must be confirmed by a majority vote of the City Council and serve only for the case in question.

- (h) **Chair and Vice-Chair.** Each year, the Board shall meet and elect a chair and a vice-chair from among its members, who will serve one-year terms and may be re-elected. The chair or a majority of the Board may call a meeting of the Board. The chair shall preside at meetings of the Ethics Review Board and perform other administrative duties. The vice-chair shall assume the duties of the chair in the event of a vacancy in that position.
- (i) **Reimbursement.** The members of the Ethics Review Board shall not be compensated but shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties.

### SECTION 3 JURISDICTION AND POWERS

- (a) **Jurisdiction.** If a complaint is filed pursuant to Section 4 of Part H (Complaints) within two (2) years of the date of an alleged violation of the ethics laws, the Ethics Review Board shall have jurisdiction to investigate and make findings and recommendations concerning:
  - (1) any alleged violation of this code of ethics or Section 141 of the City Charter by any person subject to those provisions, including, but not limited to, current city

- officials and employees, former city officials and employees, persons doing business with the city, and persons required to register as lobbyists, or
- (2) any alleged violation by a San Antonio city official of Section 171 of the Texas Local Government Code, the state conflict-of-interest law applicable to certain local public officials.

The Board shall not consider any alleged violation that occurred more than two (2) years prior to the date of the filing of the complaint.

- (b) **Termination of City Official's or Employee's Duties.** The termination of a city official's or employee's duties does not affect the jurisdiction of the Ethics Review Board with respect to alleged violations occurring prior to the termination of official duties.
- (c) **Powers.** The Ethics Review Board has power:
  - (1) to establish, amend, and rescind rules and procedures governing its own internal organization and operations, consistent with Part H (Ethics Review Board) of this code;
  - (2) to meet as often as necessary to fulfill its responsibilities;
  - (3) to designate Ethics Panels with the power to render decisions on complaints or issue advisory opinions on behalf of the Board;
  - (4) to request from the City Manager through the City Council the appointment of such staff as are necessary to carry out its duties;
  - (5) to review, index, maintain on file, and dispose of sworn complaints;
  - (6) to make notifications, extend deadlines, and conduct investigations both on complaint and as a result of an issue raised out of said complaint;
  - (7) to render, index, and maintain on file advisory opinions;
  - (8) to provide assistance to the Ethics Compliance Officer of the city in the training and education of city officials and employees with respect to their ethical responsibilities;
  - (9) to prepare an annual report and to recommend to the Mayor and City Council needed changes in ethical standards or procedures; and
  - (10) to take such other action as is necessary to perform its duties under Part H (Ethics Review Board) of this ethics code.

## SECTION 4 COMPLAINTS

- (a) **Filing.** Any person (including a member of the Ethics Review Board or its staff, acting personally or on behalf of the Board) who believes that there has been a violation of the ethics laws may file a sworn complaint with the City Clerk.

A complaint filed in good faith is qualifiedly privileged. A person who knowingly makes a false statement in a complaint, or in proceedings before the Ethics Review Board, is subject to criminal prosecution for perjury [see Part I, Section 4 (Prosecution for Perjury)] or civil liability for the tort of abuse of process.

(b) **Form.** A complaint filed under this section must be in writing and under oath and must set forth in simple, concise, and direct statements:

- (1) the name of the complainant;
- (2) the street or mailing address and the telephone number of the complainant;
- (3) the name of each person complained about;
- (4) the position or title of each person complained about;
- (5) the nature of the alleged violation, including, if possible, the specific rule or provision of law alleged to have been violated;
- (6) a statement of the facts constituting the alleged violation and the dates on which or period of time in which the alleged violation occurred; and
- (7) all documents or other material available to the complainant that are relevant to the allegation; a list of all documents or other material relevant to the allegation and available to the complainant but that are not in the possession of the complainant, including the location of the documents, if known; and a list of all documents or other material relevant to the allegation but unavailable to the complainant, including the location of the documents, if known.

The complaint must be accompanied by an affidavit stating that the information contained in the complaint is either true and correct or that the complainant has good reason to believe and does believe that the facts alleged constitute a violation of the Ethics Code. If the complaint is based on information and belief, the complaint shall state the source and basis of the information and belief. The complainant shall swear to the facts by oath before a notary public or other person authorized by law to administer oaths under penalty of perjury.

The complaint must state on its face an allegation that, if true, constitutes a violation of a rule adopted by or a law administered and enforced by the Board.

(c) **Frivolous Complaint.**

- (1) For purposes of this section, a "frivolous complaint" is a sworn complaint that is groundless and brought in bad faith or groundless and brought for the purpose of harassment.
- (2) By a vote of at least two-thirds of those present, the Board may order a complainant to show cause why the Board should not determine that the complaint filed by the complainant is a frivolous complaint.
- (3) In deciding if a complaint is frivolous, the Board will be guided by the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 13, and interpretations of that rule, and may also consider:
  - (A) the timing of the sworn complaint with respect to when the facts supporting the alleged violation became known or should have become known to the complainant, and with respect to the date of any pending election in which the respondent is a candidate or is involved with a candidacy, if any;
  - (B) the nature and type of any publicity surrounding the filing of the sworn complaint, and the degree of participation by the complainant in publicizing the fact that a sworn complaint was filed with the Board;
  - (C) the existence and nature of any relationship between the respondent and

- the complainant before the complaint was filed;
- (D) if respondent is a candidate for election to office, the existence and nature of any relationship between the complainant and any candidate or group opposing the respondent;
- (E) any evidence that the complainant knew or reasonably should have known that the allegations in the complaint were groundless; and
- (F) any evidence of the complainant's motives in filing the complaint.
- (4) Notice of an order to show cause shall be given to the complainant, with a copy to the respondent, and shall include:
  - (A) an explanation of why the complaint appears to be frivolous; and
  - (B) the date, time, and place of the hearing to be held under this section.
- (5) Before making a determination that a sworn complaint is a frivolous complaint, the Board shall hold a hearing at which the complainant may be heard; the complainant may be accompanied by counsel retained by the complainant.
- (6) By a record vote of at least two-thirds of those present after the hearing under subsection (5) of this section, the Board may determine that a complainant filed a frivolous complaint and may recommend sanctions against that complainant.

(d) **Sanctions.**

- (1) Before recommending a sanction for filing a frivolous complaint, the Board shall consider the following factors:
  - (A) the seriousness of the violation, including the nature, circumstances, consequences, extent, and gravity of the violation;
  - (B) the sanction necessary to deter future violations; and
  - (C) any other matters that justice may require.
- (2) The Board may recommend the following sanctions:
  - (A) a civil penalty of not more than \$500.
  - (B) prosecution for perjury.
  - (C) any other sanction permitted by law.
- (3) The Board may notify the appropriate regulatory or supervisory agency for their appropriate action.

(e) **Confidentiality.** No city official or employee shall reveal information relating to the filing or processing of a complaint except as required for the performance of official duties. *Ex parte* communications by members of the Ethics Review Board are prohibited by Section 6(d) of Part H (Ex Parte Communications). All papers relating to a pending complaint are confidential.

- (1) Except as otherwise provided by this section, all information relating to a sworn complaint known to or in the possession of the Board is confidential. The Board and its staff shall not communicate any information about a sworn complaint, including whether or not a complaint has been filed, to any person other than the respondent, the complainant, and a witness or potential witness identified by the respondent, the complainant, or another witness or potential witness.
- (2) Information otherwise confidential under this section may be disclosed by entering it into the record of a formal hearing or a judicial proceeding.
- (3) Confidentiality may be waived only if the complainant and each respondent

named in the sworn complaint provides a verified, written waiver of confidentiality to the Board.

- (f) **Notification.** A copy of a complaint shall be promptly forwarded by the City Clerk to the Ethics Compliance Officer and to the respondent(s), even if the complaint fails to meet the filing requirements of Part H, Section 4(b) (Form) above. A complaint that is not sworn as required by Part H, Section 4(a), shall not be forwarded by the City Clerk to the Ethics Compliance Officer, but shall be returned to the complainant. The respondent(s) shall also be provided with a copy of the ethics rules and shall be informed:
- (1) that, within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the complaint, he or she may file a sworn response with the City Clerk;
  - (2) that failure to file a response does not preclude the Ethics Review Board from adjudicating the complaint;
  - (3) that a copy of any response filed by the respondent(s) will be provided by the City Clerk to the complainant, who may, within seven (7) days of receipt, respond by sworn writing filed with the City Clerk, a copy of which shall be provided by the City Clerk to the respondent(s);
  - (4) that the respondent(s) may request a hearing; and;
  - (5) that city officials and employees have a duty to cooperate with the Ethics Review Board, pursuant to Section 6(e) of Part H (Ethics Panels).
- (g) **Assistance.** The City Clerk shall provide information to persons who inquire about the process for filing a complaint.

## SECTION 5 ETHICS COMPLIANCE OFFICER

- (a) **City Attorney's Office.** The City Attorney or an Assistant City Attorney designated by the City Attorney shall serve as the Ethics Compliance Officer for the city. The Ethics Compliance Officer shall:
- (1) receive and promptly transmit to the Ethics Review Board complaints and responses filed with the City Clerk;
  - (2) investigate, marshal, and present to the Ethics Review Board the evidence bearing upon a complaint;
  - (3) act as legal counsel to the Ethics Review Board;
  - (4) issue advisory opinions to city officials and employees about the requirements imposed by the ethics laws; and
  - (5) be responsible for the training and education of city officials and employees with respect to their ethical responsibilities;
  - (6) review complaints for legal sufficiency;
  - (7) recommend acceptance or rejection of complaint within 60 days of date made to the Ethics Review Board; and
  - (8) request additional information from complainant as needed.

At least once each year, the Ethics Compliance Officer shall cause to be distributed to each city official and employee a notice setting forth the duties of the Ethics Review Board and the procedures for filing complaints. The Ethics Compliance Officer shall also ensure that such notices are posted in prominent places in city facilities.

- (b) **Outside Independent Counsel.** An independent outside attorney, who does not otherwise represent the city, shall be appointed at the recommendation of the City Attorney, to serve as the Ethics Compliance Officer for a particular case:
- (1) when a complaint is filed relating to an alleged violation of the ethics laws by:
    - (A) the Mayor or a member of the City Council, or
    - (B) a city employee who is a department head or of higher rank;
  - (2) when the Ethics Review Board, at the recommendation of the City Attorney, requests such an appointment; or
  - (3) when requested by the City Attorney.

An independent outside attorney who is appointed has the same duties and authority as the Ethics Compliance Officer under Section 5(a)(1), 5(a)(2), 5(a)(3), 5(a)(6), 5(a)(7), and 5(a)(8) of Part H (Ethics Compliance Officer).

- (c) **Exculpatory Evidence.** The Ethics Compliance Officer shall disclose to the Ethics Panel and provide to the person charged with violating the ethics laws evidence known to the Ethics Compliance Officer tending to negate guilt or mitigate the seriousness of the offense.

## SECTION 6 ETHICS PANELS

- (a) **Assignment to an Ethics Panel.** A complaint received by the Ethics Review Board from the Ethics Compliance Officer shall be promptly assigned to an Ethics Panel consisting of three (3) or more members of the Board, who shall have full power to investigate and dispose of the complaint. Each Ethics Panel shall be constituted according to procedures established by the Board. Any member of an assigned Ethics Panel who recuses himself or herself shall be replaced by another member of the Board according to established procedures if that is necessary to ensure that the Panel has at least three (3) members. The identity of the members of the Ethics Panel shall be revealed to the person charged in the complaint who, for good cause, may request the recusal of any member of the panel.
- (b) **Notice of Charges.** The Ethics Panel shall consider whether the facts of the case establish a violation of any provision in the ethics laws, regardless of which provisions, if any, were identified in the complaint as having been allegedly violated. However, before the Ethics Panel may find that a violation of a particular rule, the respondent must be on notice that compliance with that rule is in issue and must have an opportunity to respond. Notice is conclusively established: if the complaint alleged that the rule was violated; if compliance with the rule is raised by the a

member of the Board or the Ethics Compliance Officer as a disputed issue at a hearing before the Ethics Panel; or if the Board or the Ethics Compliance Officer provides the respondent with written notice of the alleged violation and a fourteen (14) day period within which to respond in writing to the charge.

- (c) **Scheduling of a Hearing.** Regardless of whether the complainant or the respondent requests a hearing, the Ethics Panel has discretion to decide whether to hold a hearing.
- (d) **Ex Parte Communications.** It is a violation of this code:
  - (1) for the complainant, the respondent, or any person acting on their behalf to engage or attempt to engage, directly or indirectly, in *ex parte* communication about the subject matter of a complaint with a member of the Ethics Panel, any other member of the Ethics Review Board, or any known witness to the complaint; or
  - (2) for a member of an Ethics Panel or any other member of the Ethics Review Board to:
    - (A) knowingly entertain an *ex parte* communication prohibited by Subsection (1) of this rule; or
    - (B) communicate directly or indirectly with any person, other than a member of the Ethics Review Board, its staff, or the Ethics Compliance Officer, about any issue of fact or law relating to the complaint.
- (e) **Duty to Cooperate.** All city officials and employees shall cooperate with the Ethics Review Board and shall supply requested testimony or evidence to assist it in carrying out its charge. Failure to abide by the obligations imposed by this Subsection is a violation of this code of ethics.

## SECTION 7 HEARINGS

At any hearing held by an Ethics Panel during the investigation or disposition of a complaint, the following rules apply:

- (a) **General Rules.** At least three (3) members of the Ethics Panel must be present for the hearing. Any member of the Ethics Panel who is not present ceases to be a member of the Ethics Panel and may not participate in the disposition of the case. All witnesses must be sworn and all questioning of witnesses shall be conducted by the members of the Ethics Panel or the Ethics Compliance Officer. The Ethics Panel may establish time limits and other rules relating to the participation of any person in the hearing. No person may be held to have violated the ethics laws unless a majority of the Ethics Panel so finds by a preponderance of the evidence.
- (b) **Evidence.** The Ethics Panel shall rely on evidence of which a reasonably prudent person commonly relies in the conduct of the person's affairs. The Ethics Panel shall further abide by the following:



- (1) The Panel shall hear evidence relevant to the allegations; and
  - (2) The Panel shall not consider hearsay unless it finds the nature of the information is reliable and useful.
- (c) **The Person Charged.** The person charged in the complaint has the right to attend the hearing, the right to make a statement, the right to present witnesses, and the right to be accompanied by legal counsel or another advisor. Only legal counsel to the person charged in the complaint may advise that person during the course of the hearing, but may not speak on his or her behalf, except with the permission of the Ethics Panel. The time permitted for presentation will be at the discretion of the Board.
- (d) **The Complainant.** The complainant has the right to attend the hearing, the right to make a statement, and the right to be accompanied by legal counsel or another advisor. Only legal counsel to the complainant may advise the complainant during the course of the hearing, but may not speak on behalf of the complainant, except with the permission of the Ethics Panel. Witnesses may not be presented by the complainant, except with the permission of the Ethics Panel.

## SECTION 8 DISPOSITION

- (a) **Written Opinion.** The Ethics Panel shall issue a decision within ninety (90) days after the filing of a complaint. The Ethics Panel shall state in a written opinion its findings of fact and conclusions of law. The written opinion shall either:
- (1) dismiss the complaint; or
  - (2) upon finding that there that there has been a violation of the ethics laws:
    - (A) recommend criminal prosecution and/or civil remedies, in accordance with this Rule; or
    - (B) state why no remedial action is recommended.

If the Ethics Panel determines that a violation has occurred, the opinion shall identify in writing the particular rule or rules violated. If the complaint is dismissed, the grounds for the dismissal shall be set forth in the opinion. The failure of the Ethics Panel to comply within the above time limits may result in the charge being dismissed for want of prosecution. Prior to such dismissal, the complainant will be given notice and an opportunity to request continuance of the action.

- (b) **Notification.** Copies of the opinion shall be forwarded to the complainant, the person charged in the complaint, the Ethics Compliance Officer, and any member of the Ethics Review Board who did not participate in the disposition of the case. A copy of the opinion shall also be forwarded to the City Clerk, who shall make it available as authorized by law.
- (c) **Recommendations.** A recommendation for criminal prosecution shall be forwarded to the appropriate law enforcement agency. A recommendation of civil remedies

shall be forwarded through the Ethics Compliance Officer to the City Council for action.

- (d) **Similar Charges Barred.** If the complaint is dismissed because the evidence failed to establish a violation of the ethics laws, the Ethics Review Board shall not entertain any other similar complaint based on substantially the same evidence.
- (e) **Factors Relevant to Sanctions.** In deciding whether to recommend, in the case of a violation of the ethics law, criminal prosecution and/or civil remedies, the Ethics Panel shall take into account relevant considerations, including, but not limited to, the following:
  - (1) the culpability of the person charged in the complaint;
  - (2) the harm to public or private interests resulting from the violation;
  - (3) the necessity of preserving public confidence in the conduct of local government;
  - (4) whether there is evidence of a pattern of disregard for ethical obligations; and
  - (5) whether remedial action has been taken that will mitigate the adverse effect of the ethical violation.
- (f) **Civil Remedies.** The following civil remedies may be recommended by an Ethics Panel which finds that the ethics laws have been violated:
  - (1) review of the case by the City Manager, or his or her designate, for disciplinary action;
  - (2) a suit by the city for damages or injunctive relief in accordance with Section 2 of Part I (Damages and Injunctive Relief);
  - (3) disqualification from contracting in accordance with Section 6 of Part I (Disqualification from Contracting);
  - (4) voiding of a contract in accordance with Section 5 of Part I (Voiding or Ratification of Contract); and
  - (5) a fine in accordance with Section 3 of Part I (Civil Fine).
- (g) **Criminal Prosecution.** An Ethics Panel may recommend to the appropriate law enforcement agency criminal prosecution under Section 4 of Part I (Prosecution for Perjury) or under Section 171 of the Texas Local Government Law. Prosecution of any person by the City Attorney for a violation of this ethics code shall not be undertaken until a complaint is disposed of in accordance with Section 8. However, the absence of a recommendation to prosecute from an Ethics Panel to the City Attorney shall not preclude the City Attorney from exercising his or her prosecutorial discretion to prosecute a violation of this ethics code.
- (h) **Council Action.** City Council shall dispose of a recommendation from the Ethics Review Board within ninety (90) days of receiving such recommendation. The recommendation(s) of the Ethics Review Board may be accepted, rejected, modified, or recommitted to said Board for further action or clarification. Failure to take action within specified time limits may result in the charge being dismissed for want of

prosecution. Prior to such dismissal, the complainant will be given notice and an opportunity to request continuance of the action.

## **SECTION 9 PETITION FOR DECLARATORY RULING**

Any city official or employee against whom public allegations of ethics violations have been made in the media or elsewhere shall have the right to file a sworn statement with the City Clerk affirming his or her innocence, and to request the Ethics Review Board to investigate and make known its findings, and make any relevant recommendations concerning the issue.

## **SECTION 10 ADVISORY OPINIONS**

### **(a) Opinions Issued by the Ethics Review Board**

#### **(1) Requests by Persons Other Than City Officials and Employees.**

- (A) By writing filed with the City Clerk, any person other than a city official or employee may request an advisory opinion with respect to the interpretation of the ethics laws, but only with respect to whether proposed action by that person would violate the ethics laws. The City Clerk shall promptly transmit all requests for advisory opinions to the Ethics Compliance Officer and the chair of the Ethics Review Board. (City officials and employees may request advisory opinions from the City Attorney pursuant to Subsection (b)).
- (B) Within thirty (30) days of receipt by the chair of the Ethics Review Board of a request for an advisory opinion, the Board, acting *en banc* or through a designated Ethics Panel, shall issue a written advisory opinion. During the preparation of the opinion, the Board may consult with the Ethics Compliance Officer of the city and other appropriate persons. An advisory opinion shall not reveal the name of the person who made the request, if that person requested anonymity, in which case the opinion shall be written in the form of a response to an anonymous, hypothetical fact situation. A copy of the opinion shall be indexed and kept by the Ethics Review Board as part of its records for a period of not less than five (5) years. In addition, copies of the opinion shall be forwarded by the chair of the Ethics Review Board, or the Ethics Compliance Officer, to the person who requested the opinion, to the members of the Ethics Review Board, and to the City Clerk. The City Clerk shall make the opinion available as a public record in accordance with the Local Government Records Act. The Ethics Compliance Officer shall promptly post the opinion for a period of no less than five years on the Internet via the City of San Antonio homepage.

- (2) **Opinions Initiated by the Board.** On its own initiative, the Ethics Review Board, acting as the full board or through a designated Ethics Panel, may issue a written advisory opinion with respect to the interpretation of the ethics laws as they apply to persons other than city officials and employees if a majority of the

Board determines that an opinion would be in the public interest or in the interest of such person or persons subject to the provisions of the ethics laws. Such an opinion may not include the name of any individual who may be affected by the opinion. A copy of any such opinion shall be indexed and kept by the Ethics Review Board as part of its records for a period of not less than five (5) years. In addition, copies of the opinion shall be forwarded by the chair of the Ethics Review Board, or his or her designate, to the Ethics Compliance Officer and to the City Clerk. The City Clerk shall make the opinion available as a public record in accordance with the Local Government Records Act. The Ethics Compliance Officer shall promptly post the opinion for a period of no less than five years on the Internet via the City of San Antonio homepage.

- (3) **Reliance.** If a person reasonably and in good faith acts in reliance on an advisory opinion issued by the Ethics Review Board, that fact may be considered by an Ethics Panel in adjudicating a complaint filed against that person, but does not by itself bar the finding of a violation.

(b) **Opinions Issued by the Ethics Compliance Officer.**

(1) **Requests by City Officials and Employees.**

- (A) By writing filed with the Office of the City Attorney, any city official or employee may request an advisory opinion with respect to whether proposed action by that person would violate the ethics laws.
- (B) Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the request by the Office of the City Attorney, the Ethics Compliance Officer shall issue a written advisory opinion. The advisory opinion shall not reveal the name of the person who made the request, if that person requested anonymity, in which case the opinion shall be written in the form of a response to an anonymous, hypothetical fact situation. Copies of the opinion shall be forwarded by the Ethics Compliance Officer to the members of the Ethics Review Board, to the person who requested the opinion, and to the City Clerk, and promptly posted by the Ethics Compliance Officer for a period of no less than five years on the Internet via the City of San Antonio homepage. The City Clerk shall make the opinion available as a public record in accordance with the Local Government Records Act.

(2) **Reliance.**

- (A) A person who reasonably and in good faith acts in accordance with an advisory opinion issued by the Ethics Compliance Officer may not be found to have violated the ethics laws by engaging in conduct approved in the advisory opinion, provided that:
  - (i) he or she requested the issuance of the opinion;
  - (ii) the request for an opinion fairly and accurately disclosed all relevant facts; and
  - (iii) less than five years elapsed between the date the opinion was issued and the date of the conduct in question.

**SECTION 11 ANNUAL REPORT**

The Ethics Review Board shall prepare and submit an annual report to the Mayor and City Council detailing the activities of the Board during the prior year. The format for the report shall be designed to maximize public and private understanding of the Board's operations, and shall include a summary of the content of ethics opinions issued by the Board and a listing of current city lobbyists based on information gathered by the Board from records on file with the City Clerk. The report may recommend changes to the text or administration of this code of ethics. The Ethics Compliance Officer of the city shall take reasonable steps to ensure wide dissemination and availability of the annual report of the Ethics Review Board.

**SECTION 12 PUBLIC RECORDS AND OPEN MEETINGS**

Except as otherwise provided in Part H (Ethics Review Board), records relating to an alleged violation of the ethics laws, or the preparation of an ethics opinion requested by a person who asked for anonymity, shall not be open to the public and shall be treated as information that is excepted from public disclosure as required or permitted under the Texas Open Records Act or other law. No meeting or other proceeding relating to an alleged violation of the ethics law shall be treated as open to the public unless closed sessions in connection therewith are not permitted or required by the Texas Open Meetings Act or other law.

**PART I: ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS**

In addition to other remedies provided by law, the following remedies are available with respect to violations of this code of ethics:

**SECTION 1 DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Civil service employees who violate this code of ethics may be disciplined in accordance with city personnel rules and procedures. Other city officials and employees who engage in conduct that violates this code may be notified, warned, reprimanded, suspended, or removed from office or employment by the appointing authority, or by a person or body authorized by law to impose such remedies. Disciplinary action under this Section may be imposed in addition to any other penalty or remedy contained in this code of ethics or any other law.

## **SECTION 2 DAMAGES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

This code of ethics has been enacted not only to further the purposes stated in Section 1 of Part A (Statement of Purpose), but to protect the City and any other person from any losses or increased costs incurred by the City or other person as a result of the violation of these provisions. It is the intent of the City that this legislative enactment can and should be recognized by a court as a proper basis for a civil cause of action for damages or injunctive relief based upon a violation of its provisions, and that such forms of redress should be available in addition to any other penalty or remedy contained in this code of ethics or any other law.

## **SECTION 3 CIVIL FINE**

Any person, whether or not an official or employee of the city, who violates any provision of this code of ethics is subject to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500). Each day after any deadline imposed by Part E (Lobbyists) and Part G (Financial Disclosure) for which any required statement has not been filed, or for which a statement on file is incorrect, misleading, or incomplete, constitutes a separate offense.

## **SECTION 4 PROSECUTION FOR PERJURY**

Any person who files a false sworn statement under Part E (Lobbyists), Part G (Financial Disclosure), or Part H (Ethics Review Board) is subject to criminal prosecution for perjury under the laws of the State of Texas.

## **SECTION 5 VOIDING OR RATIFICATION OF CONTRACT**

If an Ethics Panel finds that there has been a violation of any provision in Sections 1 through 9 of Part B (Present City Officials and Employees), Sections 1 or 2 of Part C (Former City Officials and Employees), Sections 1 through 3 of Part D (Persons Doing Business with the City), or Section 6 of Part E (Restricted Activities) that is related to the awarding of a contract, the City Council must vote on whether to ratify or void the contract. Such action shall not affect the imposition of any penalty or remedy contained in this code of ethics or any other law.

**SECTION 6 DISQUALIFICATION FROM CONTRACTING**

- (a) Any person (including business entities and non-profit entities) who intentionally or knowingly violates any provision of Part D (Persons Doing Business with the City) or Part E (Lobbyists) may be prohibited by the City Council from entering into any contract with the city for a period not to exceed three (3) years.
- (b) It is a violation of this code of ethics:
  - (1) for a person debarred from entering into a contract with the city to enter, or attempt to enter, into a contract with the city during the period of disqualification from contracting; or
  - (2) for a city official or employee to knowingly assist a violation of Subsection (b)(1) of this rule.
- (c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit any person from receiving a service or benefit, or from using a facility, which is generally available to the public, according to the same terms.
- (d) A business entity or nonprofit entity may be disqualified from contracting based on the conduct of an employee or agent, if the conduct occurred within the scope of the employment or agency.

**SECTION 7 FAILURE TO REPORT; PENALTY**

Any City official or employee who has knowledge that a violation of the Ethics Code has been committed and intentionally fails to report such violation as provided in Part B, Section 12 of this Code (Persons Required to Report; Time to Report) is subject to the penalties herein.

**PART J: ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS****SECTION 1 OTHER OBLIGATIONS**

This code of ethics is cumulative of and supplemental to applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Compliance with the provisions of this code shall not excuse or relieve any person from any obligation imposed by state or federal law regarding ethics, financial reporting, lobbying activities, or any other issue addressed herein.

Even if a city official or employee is not prohibited from taking official action by this code of ethics, action may be prohibited by duly promulgated personnel rules, which may be more stringent.

**SECTION 2 EFFECTIVE DATE**

- (a) This ordinance shall be effective January 1, 1999.
- (b) Article III of Chapter 2 of the City Code is repealed as of January 1, 1999, except that Article III is continued in effect for the purpose of governing the conduct of former city officials and employees whose official duties terminated before January 1, 1999.

**SECTION 3 DISTRIBUTION AND TRAINING**

- (a) Prior to the effective date of this code of ethics, and periodically thereafter as appropriate, the City Attorney or designated Ethics Compliance Officer shall provide information about the code to every official and employee of the city, and copies of the code shall be made readily available to city officials, employees, and the public. Within thirty (30) days after entering upon the duties of his or her position, every new official or employee shall be furnished with information about this code of ethics. The failure of any person to receive a copy of this code shall have no effect on that person's duty to comply with this code or on the enforcement of its provisions. Upon appointment to a board or commission, such official shall be provided with a copy of the Ethics Code.
- (b) The City Attorney or designated Ethics Compliance Officer, in consultation with the Ethics Review Board, shall develop educational materials and conduct educational programs for the officials and employees of the city on the provisions of this code of ethics, Section 141 of the City Charter, and Section 171 of the Texas Local Government Law. Such materials and programs shall be designed to maximize understanding of the obligations imposed by these ethics laws.

**SECTION 4 SEVERABILITY**

If any provision of this code is found by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid or unconstitutional, or if the application of this code to any person or circumstances is found to be invalid or unconstitutional, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect the other provisions or applications of this code which can be given effect without the invalid or unconstitutional provision or application.